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STARS AND STRIPES.

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'IT'S WHY WE ALL ARE HERE'

Family of 4 Marines, 1 airman share bond of service and love

BY JAMES BOLINGER
Stars and Stripes

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION IWAKUNI, Japan — Lyle Gilbert didn't consider a military career until he felt the pull of patriotism after scores of U.S. troops were killed and injured in the 1986 La Belle disco bombing in West Berlin.

Today, he's a Marine Corps major whose example has led

Seven members of the Gilbert family are pictured in 2015. Top, from left: Maurice Murrain, Tyler Gilbert, Jordan Gilbert. Bottom: Johanna Gilbert, Sarah Rhodes, Emily Gilbert, Lyle Gilbert. Lyle, Sarah, Jordan and Tyler are Marines. Maurice is in the Air Force.

Courtesy of the Gilbert family

four of his children into military service — three as fellow Marines.

"For me there was no other alternative than to join the Marines. I never visited another recruiter," said Gilbert, the director of communication strategy at MCAS Iwakuni, alluding to the toughness, image and ethos embodied by the Corps.

SEE FAMILY ON PAGE 5

End of ALLCAPS, !!! in reviews gains support from sailors

BY JOSHUA KARSTEN AND ERIK SLAVIN
Stars and Stripes

The Navy's new annual performance evaluation will be missing several exclamation points, lots of capital letters and a rating block system that some sailors said allows lesser performers to advance because they aren't being compared broadly enough with their peers.
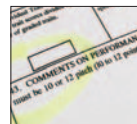
The Navy's Performance Evaluation Transformation will scrap a written comments section in which phrases like ****ROCKSTAR SAILOR WITH UN-SURPASSED TECHNICAL KNOW-HOW!!!!**** have become boilerplate,

and not just for actual rock-star sailors.

It also will eliminate a "forced distribution" system that sailors say can stymie promotions for outstanding sailors who work with outstanding peers, while favoring average sailors with little competition in their workplaces.

SEE REVIEWS ON PAGE 2

The block for written comments, often filled with flattery regardless of a sailor's performance, is going away under plans for a new evaluation system for sailors.

JOSHUA KARSTEN/*Stars and Stripes*

MILITARY

Reviews: New 9-point ranking system gives sailors better chance at promotion

FROM FRONT PAGE

Sailors will be compared across the entire Navy within their pay grades and ratings using a "specific defined standard," said Capt. John Sedlock, the transformation lead at Navy Personnel Command in Millington, Tenn.

Sailor scores under the new system "provide a more realistic measurement of the Sailor's performance and broader differentiation, not just how they rank against peers within the command," Sedlock said.

Sailors who discussed the changes with Stars and Stripes generally welcomed them, but with some reservations about the system replacing it, which is still in testing. Another previously announced aspect of the new system — input from subordinates and peers within the annual evaluations — drew a mix of reviews, as did a smartphone app that allows sailors to test some of the program's new coaching and self-assessment features.

"The evaluation system needed to break away from the word game (making mediocre sound fantastic and good leaders sound bad because of personal vendettas, conflicts, and leadership differences), forced distribution for seniority benefit, and writing styles that may or may not grasp your ratings attention at a board," Chief Petty Officer Wendell Harrison, a boatswain's mate from Sigonella, Italy, said in an email.

However, commands have over the years adapted to the hyperbole of the 18-line maximum, written comment section known as Block 43, often learning to read between the lines.

The block also gives commands an opportunity to learn what impact a sailor made beyond numeric values, said Petty Officer 1st Class Sylvia Nealy, stationed in Bahrain.

"On the flip side, sailors will NOT have the opportunity to add false and unnecessary 'fluff' in their evaluation while exaggerating the truth," Nealy wrote in an email.

Nealy said the end of forced distribution will give high performers a better shot at promotion. The current system includes a block where sailors receive either an "early promote," a "must promote," "promotable" or a lesser mark. The top 20 percent of sailors in a department, which may have only one sailor or dozens, generally are eligible for the early promote ranking.

Under the current system, sailors do not have "the opportunity to move up for promotion if a previous Sailor from the command "already" has the EP and the command "continues" to assist this Sailor," regardless of whether the sailor deserved the early promote, Nealy said.

The new evaluation will include an expanded value statement section, which grades sailors based on professional knowledge, work quality, military bearing and other areas. The 5-point ranking will now include a 9-point scale that will judge whether a sailor is doing the job below, at or above the standards of their rank.

Evaluators will be timed in their responses, "to provide an instinctual assessment of their qualities and is based on proven behavioral science studies that indicate an initial response is usually the most candid and accurate," Sedlock said.

Chief Petty Officer Matthew Herndon, an administration yeoman from Naval Air Station Sigonella, Italy, tried out the new system by completing an online self-assessment.

Herndon liked the new system's timed inputs but wasn't impressed by the new coaching system, which begins with a self-assessment.

"The new system doesn't describe how sailors can fix (weaknesses listed by the sailor) nor gives insight on why the things they're doing good or things they need to work on is good for them … or vice versa," Herndon said.

Petty Officer 2nd Class Richard White, a personnel specialist in Bahrain, says he likes the 9-point rating scale and the incorporation of peer and subordinate input, which allows for the inclusion of "strengths and weaknesses that may not be noticed or voiced in regular evaluations."

But White also expressed concern for potential delays with so many inputs affecting a timely completion.

Some expressed concern that subordinates might not have a complete picture of a sailor's duties or might input during the coaching phase to further a grudge; however, any such ranking would only be part of a larger coaching report.

Others said subordinate input during the coaching phase would be a benefit.

"We as sailors and leaders can all make improvements to ourselves, and the ones who will not shy away from letting you know that are the junior leaders," Harrison said.

The evaluation overhaul team is now conducting its third test phase of the system, which includes 10,000 participants from 140 commands, and is primarily focused on the coaching system.

Sedlock added that the biggest challenge for the new system is the expected resistance to change around the fleet.

"This endeavor requires a fundamental change in culture where we embrace the delivery and receipt of honest and candid feedback that enables us all to better achieve our optimal levels of performance," Sedlock said.

The overhaul is part of a larger push from Navy leadership called Sailor 2025, an initiative designed to improve pay, personnel and career management systems, Navy officials said.

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> '[Scores under the new system] provide a more realistic measurement of the Sailor's performance.'
>
> **Capt. John Sedlock**
> Lead at Navy Personnel Command

Score	Value Statement Score Description
1	Does Not Meet Standard at Current Grade
2	Minimally Meets Standard at Current Grade
3	Somewhat Meets Standard at Current Grade
4	Mostly Meets Standard at Current Grade
5	Fully Meets Standard at Current Grade
6	Somewhat Meets Standard at Next Grade
7	Mostly Meets Standard at Next Grade
8	Fully Meets Standard at Next Grade
9	Exceeds Standard at Next Grade

Courtesy of the Navy Personnel Command

The Navy's new planned 9-point ranking system for sailor evaluations seen on their new mobile app.

No paper Wednesday

Stars and Stripes will not publish on Wednesday. Go to stripes.com for the latest news.

TODAY
IN STRIPES

MILITARY

Top Stars and Stripes staff photos from 2018

From staff reports

Stars and Stripes 2018 photographs captured grief and sacrifice from around the world.

They ranged from the remains of servicemembers handed over by North Korea to a moon rising over the U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial in Virginia, to the view of Sen. John McCain lying in state in the Capitol's Rotunda and a Marine walking through the graves at Aisne-Marne American Cemetery in France.

In a social media contest where the Stars and Stripes readers voted on Facebook for their favorite photo, there was one clear winner — a Memorial Day salute to fallen troops.

On May 28, a field of 500 luminary lights and a display of images, names and videos of U.S. troops who have died in America's post-9/11 wars was set up near the Bagram Air Field PX in Afghanistan. Taken by downrange reporter Chad Garland, the photo illustrates the toll the wars have taken on American servicemembers.

Reader Christine Evans voted for the photo: "This one should be in Life magazine."

The photo had more than double the amount of votes than any other image.

CHAD GARLAND/Stars and Stripes

A field of 500 luminary lights and a display of images, names and videos of the U.S. troops who have died in America's post-9/11 wars was set up on Memorial Day near the Bagram Air Field PX in Afghanistan.

Winning photos by vote totals

The winners from the 14 photos that made the final round, with the most votes to the least:

1. Lights in Afghanistan representing US troops who have died in post-9/11 wars, by Chad Garland, 105 votes.

2. The late Sen. John McCain lying in state in the Capitol's Rotunda, by Carlos Bongioanni, 34 votes.

3. Full moon rises behind the U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial in Virginia, by Joe Gromelski, 29 votes.

4.-5. Tie: Remains of five WWII airmen were buried together at Arlington National Cemetery, by Meredith Tibbetts; and WWII veteran Andrew Abugelis is escorted through WWII Memorial on May 28, by Michael Darnell, with 28 votes each.

6. Marine Sgt. Maj. Darrell Carver walks through Aisne-Marne American Cemetery in Belleau, France, on Memorial Day, by Michael Abrams, 25 votes.

7. Marine taking a drag of his cigarette before training in Hawaii, by Marcus Fichtl, 23 votes.

8. Remains handed over by North Korea are seen before a ceremony at Osan Air Base, by Kim Gamel, 22 votes.

9. Hershel "Woody" Williams salutes before the grave of Charles G. Fischer at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, by Wyatt Olson, 20 votes.

10. American flags — 5,520 of them — fill the National Mall, representing veteran suicides, by Meredith Tibbetts, 18 votes.

11. Gen. Robert Abrams takes part in change-of-command ceremony as incoming commander of U.S. Forces Korea, by Marcus Fichtl, 15 votes.

12.-13. Tie: Polito "Paul" Olivas, 100, skydives in tandem over Hawaii, by Wyatt Olson; and a pilot reunites at RAF Lakenheath, England, with her child and husband after six-month deployment, by William Howard, with 12 votes.

14. Artwork atop the escalator at the Toledo Metro Station in Naples, Italy, by Scott Wyland, 4 votes.

CARLOS BONGIOANNI/Stars and Stripes

Clockwise from above: A steady stream of visitors pass through the U.S. Capitol's Rotunda where the late Sen. John McCain was lying in state on Aug. 31. A full moon rises behind the U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial in Arlington, Va., on Aug. 26. The remains of five World War II airmen were buried together at Arlington National Cemetery on June 27. Andrew Abugelis, right, is escorted through the National World War II Memorial in Washington during a Memorial Day ceremony May 28.

JOE GROMELSKI/Stars and Stripes

MICHAEL S. DARNELL/Stars and Stripes

MEREDITH TIBBETTS/Stars and Stripes

MILITARY

Afghanistan: Remembering the fallen of 2018

BY PHILLIP WALTER WELLMAN
Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — Fourteen American servicemembers were killed in Afghanistan in 2018 as the longest war in U.S. history began its 18th year in October.

Many of the servicemembers who died in Afghanistan this year were from elite units. The deadliest single incident occurred in November, when four troops were killed by a roadside bomb in central Ghazni province.

Sgt. 1st Class Mihail Golin

Army Special Forces Sgt. 1st Class Mihail Golin, 34, was killed in a New Year's Day firefight in Afghanistan's eastern Nangarhar province. Golin, of Fort Lee, N.J., was assigned to the Fort Carson, Colo.-based B Company, 2nd Battalion, 10th Special Forces Group. The weapons sergeant was born in Latvia and moved to the U.S. in 2004. He enlisted in the Army in 2005. He was on his fourth deployment to Afghanistan when he was killed. He received the Purple Heart with one oak leaf cluster, an Army Commendation Medal with two oak leaf clusters and an Army Achievement Medal with two oak leaf clusters, among other decorations.

Spc. Gabriel D. Conde

Army Spc. Gabriel D. Conde, 22, of Loveland, Colo., was killed by small-arms fire on April 30 during a firefight in Kapisa province. He was assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 509th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, stationed at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in Alaska. Conde's family said he had a calling to be a warrior. "I feel very proud of who he is," his mother Donna Conde told Denver's Fox 31 after her son's death. "He is the kind of son any mother would be proud to have." Among his awards and honors were a Purple Heart and a Bronze Star with valor, which were awarded posthumously for battlefield heroism.

Cpl. Joseph Maciel

Army Cpl. Joseph Maciel, 20, was killed in an apparent insider attack in Tirin Kot district in Uruzgan province on July 7. Originally from South Gate, Calif., Maciel was assigned to the 1st Security Force Assistance Brigade. Maciel served in the Army for two years and was assigned to Fort Benning, Ga. He was described as a soldier beloved by his colleagues and dedicated to the mission. His decorations include the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart.

Sgt. 1st Class Christopher A. Celiz

Army Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Andrew Celiz, 32, died of a wound sustained while evacuating a wounded Afghan soldier in eastern Paktia province on July 12. The mortar platoon sergeant was from Summerville, S.C., and was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment, at Hunter Army Airfield, Ga. Regiment commander Col. Brandon Tegtmeier described Celiz as "a national treasure who led his Rangers with passion, competence and an infectiously positive attitude no matter the situation." Celiz was posthumously awarded the Purple Heart, the Bronze Star and a Meritorious Service Medal.

Staff Sgt. Reymund R. Transfiguracion

Green Beret Staff Sgt. Reymund Rarogal Transfiguracion, 36, from Waikoloa, Hawaii, died on Aug. 8 from improvised explosive device wounds received the day before while on patrol in southern Helmand province. Transfiguracion was assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne), at Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Washington. He was posthumously promoted to sergeant first class and awarded the Bronze Star, the Purple Heart and the Meritorious Service Medal. Transfiguracion was described by his fellow soldiers as a dynamic leader and trusted professional. He is survived by his wife and two children, a son and a daughter.

Sgt. Maj. Timothy Bolyard

Army Command Sgt. Maj. Timothy Bolyard, 42, was killed by an insider attack at a forward operating base in eastern Logar province on Sept. 3. Originally from Thornton, W.Va., Bolyard was described as a soldier who always kept his cool under pressure. He was a senior noncommissioned officer in 3rd Squadron, 1st Security Force Assistance Brigade, at Fort Benning, Ga., and received six Bronze Star medals, including two with valor, during a 24-year career and seven deployments. Bolyard is survived by his wife and three children.

Staff Sgt. Diobanjo S. Sanagustin

Army Staff Sgt. Diobanjo S. Sanagustin, 32, died from a noncombat injury at Bagram Air Field on Sept. 4. The native of National City, Calif., joined the Army as an infantryman in 2007. He deployed three times — to Kosovo, Iraq and Afghanistan. He was assigned to the 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division. He was a squad leader in Bravo Company. "He made a lasting impact on the Manchu formation, and we will forever cherish his memory," said Lt. Col. David Uthlaut, commander of 4th Battalion. Sanagustin's awards and decorations include two Army Commendation Medals, seven Army Achievement Medals, two Iraq Campaign Medals with campaign star and the Expert Infantryman's Badge.

Spc. James A. Slape

Army Spc. James A. Slape, 23, of Morehead City, N.C., was killed by an IED blast in southern Helmand province on Oct. 4. He was posthumously promoted to sergeant. At the time of his death, Slape was clearing an area of explosives. He was assigned to the 430th Explosive Ordnance Disposal Company, 60th Troop Command, North Carolina Army National Guard, based in Washington, N.C. "We honor his courage, his selfless service," said Maj. Gen. Greg Lusk, North Carolina National Guard adjutant.

Maj. Brent Taylor

U.S. Army National Guard Maj. Brent Taylor, 39, was killed during an insider attack in Kabul on Nov. 3. Taylor was the mayor of North Ogden, Utah, at the time of his death. He had a "profound influence" on the community, according to a statement by the local government. "He was the best of men with the ability to see potential and possibility in everything around him," the statement said. "We feel blessed to have had him as our mayor." Taylor served twice in Iraq as a convoy security commander and then as an adviser to the Iraqi intelligence agency. He had previously deployed to Afghanistan as a combat adviser to the Afghan Border Police. He is survived by his wife and seven children.

Sgt. Leandro A.S. Jasso

Army Sgt. Leandro A.S. Jasso, 25, was mortally wounded during a firefight with al-Qaida forces in western Nimruz province on Nov. 24. He was assigned to 2nd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment, and was on his third deployment to Afghanistan. Jasso enlisted in the Army in 2012 and became an accomplished soldier completing the Basic Airborne Course, earning the Combat Infantryman's Badge and the Ranger tab. "Sgt. Hasso was a humble professional who placed mission first, lived the Ranger Creed and will be deeply missed," said Lt. Col. Rob McChrystal, commander of the 2nd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment.

Staff Sgt. Dylan J. Elchin

Air Force Staff Sgt. Dylan J. Elchin, 25, was killed by a roadside bomb in central Ghazni province on Nov. 27, an attack that claimed the lives of three other U.S. servicemembers. Elchin, of Hookstown, Pa., was the only airman killed in Afghanistan in 2018 and was on his first deployment. He was a combat controller assigned to the 26th Special Tactics Squadron at Cannon Air Force Base, N.M. Elchin was described by his family as a daredevil who was driven to succeed in the Air Force. He was planning to marry his fiancee when he finished his deployment. His awards and decorations include the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Army Commendation Medal with Valor, Air Force Commendation Medal and Air Force Combat Action Medal. "He's the whole family's hero," said his brother, Aaron.

Capt. Andrew P. Ross

Army Capt. Andrew Patrick Ross, 29, also was killed by the roadside bomb in central Ghazni province that day. Ross, of Lexington, Va., was assigned to 1st Battalion, 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne) at Fort Bragg, N.C. The West Point graduate had more than seven years of service in the Army and was on his second overseas tour. Ross' wife, Felicia, called him "the most perfect man, love of my life." His honors and decorations include two Bronze Star medals, a Purple Heart and the Meritorious Service Medal, among others.
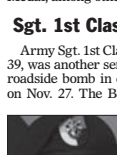
Sgt. 1st Class Eric M. Emond

Army Sgt. 1st Class Eric Michael Emond, 39, was another servicemember killed by a roadside bomb in central Ghazni province on Nov. 27. The Boston native had served more than two decades in the Army and Marine Corps and was on his seventh overseas tour when he died. He was posthumously awarded the Bronze Star, Purple Heart and Meritorious Service Medal. A husband and father of three young girls from Brush Prairie, Wash., Emond was assigned to 1st Battalion, 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne) at Fort Bragg, N.C. He helped found Massachusetts Fallen Heroes, which supports veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan and Gold Star families from his home state. "He was the bedrock of the organization," said Dan Magoon, the foundation's executive director.

Sgt. Jason M. McClary

Army Sgt. Jason Mitchell McClary, 24, of Export, Pa., died on Dec. 2 in Landstuhl, Germany, from wounds sustained during the Nov. 27 roadside bomb attack in Afghanistan's central Ghazni province, where the three other U.S. troops were killed. McClary, an infantryman, was assigned to 1st Battalion, 38th Infantry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Fort Carson, Colo. "He epitomizes what it is to be a professional, a warrior and a soldier," McClary's regimental commander Lt. Col. Christopher Roberts said. McClary's awards and decorations include two Purple Heart medals, three Army Commendation Medals, including one with valor and one for combat, among others. He is survived by his wife and two sons.

MILITARY

Pvt. Tyler Gilbert, center, poses with his mother, Johanna, and his father, Maj. Lyle Gilbert, Nov. 30 at Parris Island, S.C., after completing recruit training.

Family: Father says he didn't push his children to join military

FROM FRONT PAGE

His eldest daughter, Marine Capt. Sarah Rhodes, 29, is a company commander at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C. She is a communication strategy officer by trade, just like her father. Marines in that field serve as military journalists, broadcasters, photographers and public relations specialists.

Rhodes' younger sister, Marine Sgt. Jordan Gilbert, 25, is also in communication strategy and stationed on Okinawa.

Maurice Murrain, 19, whom the couple adopted at 12, graduated Air Force basic training Sept. 28.

Tyler Gilbert, 18, who graduated recruit training Nov. 30, was a member of the same recruit company and battalion his father graduated from 32 years ago. He is now headed to Camp Lejeune, N.C., where he will attend combat engineer school.

The Gilberts trace their Marine Corps heritage to Lyle's father, Dominic, who served in the 1950s. He also worked behind a camera and today would be considered a communication strategy Marine like his son and granddaughters.

Like dominos

Rhodes was the first of her siblings to sign on the dotted line, in 2012, and said she joined because of the examples set by her parents. Her mother and biological father were in the Army, and she grew up around the Marine Corps and participated in the Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps while attending high school on Okinawa.

"I loved everything about the uniform," Rhodes said. "That feeling of pride started me on the path to joining the Marine Corps."

Jordan Gilbert was next, in April 2013. She was recently selected for promotion to staff sergeant and will sew on her new rocker this year.

"I got supermotivated when my older sister graduated" from Officer Candidate School, Jordan said. "The whole plane ride back, I asked my dad a bunch of different questions, and the next month I signed up."

The Gilberts' sons graduated from MCAS Iwakuni's Matthew C. Perry High School together earlier this year and were best friends growing up. So much so, that the

Gilberts adopted Murrain in 2012 before moving to Okinawa.

Murrain said he wasn't set on joining the Air Force until his junior year of high school. Today, he is attending technical school for aircraft structural maintenance at Pensacola Naval Air Station, Fla. He hopes to be stationed at Okinawa's Kadena Air Base after graduation.

Before leaving home for recruit training, his brother, Tyler, said being a Marine has always been his dream. "Growing up around the Marine Corps made me want to join," he said. "It's a pride thing. (Two of) my sisters had already joined, and I really wanted to make my parents proud. I think the military is the best way to do that."

Family within a family

Lyle Gilbert met his wife, Johanna, then a specialist and finance technician in the Army, while training to become a Marine broadcaster at the Defense Information School at Fort Benjamin Harrison, Ind. Together, the couple has raised a tightknit family with an emphasis on service. Currently, Johanna is a civilian nurse and lives in North Carolina.

"I think we built it together, although the greater balance was with my wife," Lyle Gilbert said. "She has always been very nurturing, very loving, very open. She always wanted to have a place where the friends come, not a place our kids wanted to stay away from."

Their children remember growing up around young Marines from their father's work who would join the family for holiday parties and other gatherings.

"On Christmas, these corporals and lance corporals would be watching movies in the living room," Jordan Gilbert said. "Even when dad was deployed, my mom would always have his Marines over."

That bond carries over even though the family is now spread all over the world.

"We grew up together," Rhodes said. "And we go through it in the Marine Corps together as well. We have an extra bond that not everyone has."

Lyle said he understands that

most of his children will likely be deployed — potentially to combat zones. "The only thing needed for evil to prevail is for good and capable men and women to stand idly by and do nothing. And I tell [my children] that," he said. "If not you, then who? Serving your country, protecting your fellow man and your family, putting it all on the line for that, it's why we are all here."

He said he was very proud when he heard that Rhodes had decided to join the Marines. Despite his and his wife's pride in their own service, Lyle Gilbert said he didn't push his children to join the military.

Instead, he said, the focus was on serving others and doing things the right way.

"If you are going to do something, do it 100 percent," said Tyler Gilbert, explaining one of his father's philosophies. "Even if it's a mostly meaningless task, do it and do it right. Do it the way it is supposed to be done, not just to get it over with."

Two Gilbert children chose paths outside the military. Emily Gilbert, 20, is teaching English at a preschool in Iwakuni while seeking a degree in elementary education.

"I had made it very apparent that I wasn't going to join the military," she said. "It's their thing. It's amazing what they are doing, but I wouldn't be able to do it."

Amanda Segobiano, 27, lives in California, holds a degree in

sociology and plans to work as a counselor for formerly incarcerated adults.

What the future holds

While many of the Gilberts' children may be on active duty for the next several years, none is committed to making the service a career like their father.

Rhodes will hit her six-year mark in December. She said she wants to see what her next station holds before she commits to the long term.

Lyle Gilbert is also at a crossroads. January will mark his 33rd year in the Marine Corps. Though retirement has long been an option, he was notified of his selection to lieutenant colonel the day before Tyler completed recruit training. With his tour at MCAS Iwakuni coming to an end this year, he said all options are on the table.

"The first thing we advise our children, with anything in life, is to pray about it," his wife said. "Then do your homework. Know what you're getting into and make sure it's something you want and can to do. The military brings discipline, sacrifice and commitment. They understood this, and it's not a decision they have taken lightly.

"As a mom, I couldn't be more proud," she added. "And our family photos are amazing!"

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Courtesy photos

Now-Sgt. Jordan Gilbert, right, is greeted by her older sister, now-Marine Capt. Sarah Rhodes, after completing Marine Corps recruit training in 2013.

WAR/MILITARY

Trump defends Syria exit as Putin, Erdogan fill void

Bloomberg

President Donald Trump defended his decision to withdraw from Syria as the fulfillment of a campaign promise, pushing back against criticism from lawmakers in his own party that the abrupt change in policy harms U.S. interests and cedes influence to Russia and Iran.

"I campaigned on getting out of Syria and other places," Trump said Monday on Twitter. "Now when I start getting out the Fake News Media, or some failed Generals who were unable to do the job before I arrived like to complain about me & my tactics, which are working. Just doing what I said I was going to do!"

With the U.S. preparing its exit, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan have assumed the lead in shaping Syria's future. At a meeting in Moscow between the two countries' foreign ministers and intelligence chiefs on Saturday, they agreed to coordinate next steps and professed a common interest in clearing the country of terrorist groups.

But that doesn't mean Russia and Turkey are completely aligned. The Syrian war has often pitted them on opposite sides, with Russia backing Syrian President Bashar Assad while Turkey was the most vocal proponent of overthrowing and replacing him.

To further complicate the issue, while Trump said that NATO ally Turkey has promised to clear out what's left of Islamic State in Syria, Erdogan has also been looking for an opportunity to hit back at a U.S.-backed Kurdish group in Syria, the YPG, which led some of the most intense fighting against Islamic State. Turkey views the YPG as a menace to its internal security and classifies it as a terrorist organization.

Trump's decision left the YPG exposed to an invasion by Turkey's army, the second-largest in NATO, and prompted the resignation of his defense secretary, Jim Mattis.

Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham, a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee from South Carolina, has been implying that his efforts to persuade Trump to slow down the withdrawal were working, telling CNN on Sunday that "if we leave now, the Kurds are going to get slaughtered." He said Trump would be talking to Turkey to make sure that war didn't break out "between the Turks and our allies the Kurds."

Graham also cited the continuing presence in Syria of Iran, Trump's designated arch-enemy in the Middle East, saying, "If we leave now, there'll be a land bridge from Tehran to Beirut in terms of supplying weapons

against Israel."

Trump already has backed away from the notion of an immediate withdrawal, saying a week ago that the pullout of U.S. troops from the area would be "slow & highly coordinated."

Facts on the ground have changed rapidly in the two weeks since Trump first tweeted his intention to bring home U.S. troops.

With support from the Kremlin, Syria's Assad sent government troops to retake control of the key town of Manbij on Friday, replacing the U.S.-backed YPG forces as the dominant power in the area and preempting a Turkish invasion. Assad has now reasserted his control of most of the country after an eight-year war that killed hundreds of thousands and left many of the country's cities as uninhabitable wastelands.

Russia and Turkey have a crucial role to play in ending the conflict and mapping out the future of Syria, Putin told Erdogan in a New Year's message published by the Kremlin on Sunday, a day after the meeting in Moscow between their envoys.

In a New Year's message to Assad, Putin said Russia "will continue to provide all possible assistance" to Syria in "the fight against the forces of terrorism, in defense of state sovereignty and territorial integrity."

'Hold fast': Mattis departs with a new message, but no fanfare

By Dan Lamothe
The Washington Post

Defense Secretary Jim Mattis planned to leave his office Monday night with none of the pageantry typically associated with the position, and a short message to U.S. troops: "Hold fast."

Mattis, who resigned Dec. 20, planned to stay as Pentagon chief through Feb. 28 to ensure a smooth transition. He was forced out earlier by President Donald Trump on Dec. 23, as the president complained about the media coverage he was receiving over the resignation. The defense secretary has said little since then, but he asked Defense Department personnel on Monday to remain "undistracted" from their mission to uphold the U.S. Constitution.

"On February 1, 1865, President Lincoln sent to General Ulysses S. Grant a one sentence telegram. It read: 'Let nothing which is transpiring, change, hinder, or delay your military movements, or plans.'" Mattis wrote in a memo released by the Pentagon.

"Our Department's leadership, civilian and military, remains in the best possible hands. I am confident that each of you remains undistracted from our sworn mission to support and defend the Constitution while protecting our way of life," Mattis continued. "Our Department is proven to be at its best when the times are most difficult. So keep the faith in our country and hold fast, alongside our allies, aligned against our foes."

Mattis, 68, added that "it has

JABIN BOTSFORD/The Washington Post

Defense Secretary Jim Mattis at the White House in February.

been my high honor to serve at your side."

"May God hold you safe in the air, on land, and at sea," he concluded.

Like his pointed resignation letter, Mattis's goodbye memo stresses the need to stand alongside allies, something Trump has repeatedly questioned. Trump dismissed the concerns Mattis raised in his resignation letter Dec. 23, saying in a tweet that "many of these same countries take advantage of their friendship with the United States."

In keeping with Mattis's wishes, the Pentagon will not hold a traditional farewell ceremony for him. Pentagon chiefs who leave office — even when forced out — typically are sent off with a ceremony in which the president plays a prominent role.

"Secretary Mattis prefers that today, like every day, the focus remain on the mission and those who carry it out," said Dana White, the chief Pentagon spokeswoman.

Massachusetts judge sides with 'bad paper' veterans denied bonuses

By Nikki Wentling
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A Massachusetts judge sided with three Afghanistan war veterans who filed a lawsuit against the state after being denied "Welcome Home" bonuses because of their other-than-honorable military discharges.

In a decision handed down Wednesday, Associate Justice Michael Ricciuti ordered the Massachusetts Veterans' Bonus Appeal Board to reconsider rejecting the veterans. Lawyers in the case estimate that beyond their three clients, the decision means about 4,000 Massachusetts veterans will be eligible now for the bonuses.

"Veterans with bad paper discharges are among the most at-risk veterans and yet are often told that they are ineligible for traditional veteran services and programs," said Laurel Fresquez, an attorney who represented the three veterans. "Thanks to this decision and these three veterans, thousands of Massachusetts veterans will finally have a right to some recognition for their honorable service to our country."

The Massachusetts legislature created the Welcome Home Bonus in 2005 for post-9/11 servicemembers. Under the program, people who deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan — and lived in Massachusetts for a period of at least six months before enlisting — are eligible to apply for a one-time, tax-free $1,000 bonus. The program is run by the state treasury.

Jeffrey Machado, Washington Santos and Herik Espinosa — three Army veterans named in the lawsuit — each completed enlistments and re-joined multiple times. They applied for the Welcome Home Bonus and were denied by the treasury and then the Veterans' Bonus Appeal Board, which argued their other-than-honorable discharges from their final enlistments made them ineligible.

Machado, Santos and Espinosa, represented by student attorneys at Harvard Law School's Veterans Legal Clinic, filed a lawsuit in 2017 in Massachusetts Superior Court. In the complaint, they argued the board take into consideration their prior enlistments, which they completed honorably.

The judge agreed, calling the state's denial "erroneous as a matter of law, arbitrary and capricious." He said the board's decision to deny the benefit disincentivized servicemembers from enlisting multiple times.

"The Bonus Law was designed to reward service to the country," Ricciuti's order reads. "The board's reading would penalize such service for military members who voluntarily remain in combat, a result at odds with the legislature's intent."

In a statement Sunday, Machado, the lead plaintiff, said the decision meant more than the $1,000 — it was a symbolic win for veterans with other-than-honorable discharges.

Those discharges, known as "bad paper," can prevent veterans from receiving federal assistance, such as Department of Veterans Affairs health care, disability payments, education and housing. Some lawmakers and veteran advocates have long argued servicemembers with bad paper were, in many cases, unjustly released from the military because of mental health issues.

The Government Accountability Office released findings in 2017

that the Defense Department separated approximately 92,000 servicemembers for misconduct from 2011 through 2015, and 57,000 of them were diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury or other conditions that can change servicemembers' moods and behaviors and lead to disciplinary problems.

Machado deployed to Afghanistan during Operation Enduring Freedom in 2012-13 and immediately re-enlisted. According to the complaint, Machado's service ended in 2014 with an other-than-honorable discharge that was "given out after the wounds of war and the stress of service became too great."

Machado was later diagnosed with PTSD and applied for the Welcome Home Bonus during a particularly tough time when facing the possibility of homelessness, his lawyers said.

"What really matters to me is that other Massachusetts veterans will be recognized for their honorable service to our country," Machado said in a statement. "It's less about the bonus itself — it's about what it represents."

Veterans who believe they're

now eligible for the bonus can apply for it through the state government website. Dana Montalto, a clinical instructor at the Veterans Legal Clinic, said she hoped the state would reach out to veterans who might be eligible.

"For now, the burden is on these veterans to find out about this decision and apply," Montalto said in a statement.

The Massachusetts decision follows other recent wins for veterans with other-than-honorable discharges.

Congress approved a measure in March that requires the VA to provide veterans with mental health screenings and care, even if they received bad paper. Veterans who served in combat zones or areas of hostilities, worked as drone operators in combat zones or experienced sexual abuse or assault are eligible.

In addition, Connecticut opened its state VA resources in October to veterans who can show their other-than-honorable discharges are linked to PTSD, traumatic brain injury or sexual trauma. It's estimated 800 veterans could benefit from the change.

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NATION

Trump reaffirms his wall pledge

By Zeke Miller
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Despite public equivocations by three confidants, President Donald Trump is insisting he wants to build a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border.

"An all concrete Wall was NEVER ABANDONED," tweeted Trump, whose demand for congressional funding to construct one has caused a budgetary standoff. "Some areas will be all concrete but the experts at Border Patrol prefer a Wall that is see through (thereby making it possible to see what is happening on both sides)."

Trump's comments on Monday came after officials, including his departing chief of staff, indicated that the president's signature campaign pledge to build the wall would not be fulfilled as advertised.

Trump sparked fervent chants of "Build that wall!" at rallies before and after his election and more recently cited a lack of funding for a border wall as the reason for partially shutting down the government. At times the president has also waved off the idea that the wall could be any kind of barrier.

However, White House chief of staff John Kelly told the Los Angeles Times in an interview published Sunday that Trump abandoned the notion of "a solid concrete wall early on in the administration."

Along the same lines, White House counselor Kellyanne Conway called discussion of the apparent contradiction "a silly semantic argument."

Sen. Lindsey Graham, the South Carolina Republican who is close to the president, emerged from a Sunday lunch at the White House to tell reporters that "the wall has become a metaphor for border security" and referred to "a physical barrier along the border."

Graham said Trump was "open-minded" about a broader immigration agreement, saying the budget impasse presented an opportunity to address issues beyond the border wall. But a previous attempt to reach a compromise that addressed the status of "Dreamers" — young immigrants brought to the U.S. as children — broke down last year as a result of escalating White House demands.

Graham said he hoped to end the shutdown by offering Democrats incentives to get them to vote for wall funding and told

PABLO MARTINEZ MONSIVAIS/AP

After meeting with President Donald Trump at the White House on Sunday, South Carolina Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham, above, said the budget impasse presents an opportunity to address immigration issues beyond the border wall Trump is seeking.

CNN before his lunch with Trump that "there will never be a deal without wall funding."

Graham proposed to help two groups of immigrants get approval to continue living in the U.S: about 700,000 young "Dreamers" brought into the U.S. illegally as children and about 400,000 people receiving temporary protected status because they are from countries struggling with natural disasters or armed conflicts. He also said the compromise should include changes in federal law to discourage people from trying to enter the U.S. illegally.

"Democrats have a chance here to work with me and others, including the president, to bring legal status to people who have very uncertain lives," Graham said.

The partial government shutdown began Dec. 22 after Trump bowed to conservative demands that he fight to make good on his vow and secure funding for the wall before Republicans lose control of the House on Wednesday. Democrats have remained committed to blocking the Republican president's priority, and with neither side

engaging in substantive negotiation, the effect of the partial shutdown was set to spread and to extend into the new year.

Talks have been at a stalemate for more than a week, after Democrats said the White House offered to accept $2.5 billion for border security. Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer told Vice President Mike Pence that it wasn't acceptable, nor was it guaranteed that Trump, under intense pressure from his conservative base to fulfill his signature campaign promise, would settle for that amount.

Conway claimed Sunday that "the president has already compromised" by dropping his request for the wall from $25 billion, and she called on Democrats to return to the negotiating table.

Democrats maintain that they have already presented the White House with three options to end the shutdown, none of which funds the wall, and insist that it's Trump's move.

The shutdown has forced hundreds of thousands of federal workers and contractors to stay home or work without pay.

Kelly defends rocky time at White House

Los Angeles Times

WASHINGTON — In August 2017, shortly after John Kelly became White House chief of staff, he convened crucial meetings on Afghanistan at President Donald Trump's golf club in Bedminster, N.J.

Top officials from the Pentagon and the CIA, the director of national intelligence, diplomats and lawmakers huddled with Trump as Kelly and others urged him not to give up in Afghanistan.

"When I first took over, he was inclined to want to withdraw from Afghanistan," Kelly recounted during an exclusive interview Friday with the Los Angeles Times.

"He was frustrated. It was a huge decision to make ... and frankly there was no system at all for a lot of reasons — palace intrigue and the rest of it — when I got there."

The retired four-star Marine general will leave the administration Wednesday. First as Homeland Security chief and then in 18 months at the White House, he presided over some of the Trump administration's most controversial immigration and security policies.

In the interview, Kelly defended his rocky tenure, arguing that it is best measured by what the president did not do when Kelly was at his side. It was only after Kelly's departure was confirmed Dec. 8, for example, that Trump announced the pullout of all U.S. troops from Syria and half the 14,000 troops from Afghanistan — two moves that Kelly had opposed.

Kelly's supporters say he stepped in to block or divert the president on dozens of matters. They credit him, in part, for persuading Trump not to pull U.S. forces out of South Korea, or withdraw from NATO, as he had threatened.

Kelly said he made sure that Trump had access to multiple streams of detailed information before he made a decision.

"It's never been: The president just wants to make a decision based on no knowledge and ignorance," Kelly said. "You may not like his decision, but at least he was fully informed on the impact."

Trump sometimes pressed his advisers on the limits of his authority under the law, often asking Kelly, "'Why can't we do it this way?'" But Trump never ordered him to do anything illegal, Kelly stressed, "because we wouldn't have."

"If he had said to me, 'Do it, or you're fired,'" Kelly said he would have resigned.

Kelly served 46 years in the Marines, making him the U.S. military's longest-serving general when he retired in January 2016. When Trump picked him to head Homeland Security, and then serve as chief of staff, officials from the Pentagon to Capitol Hill expressed hope that Kelly would be one of the "adults in the room" to manage a mercurial president.

To critics, Kelly failed, unable to rein in Trump's angry tweets or bring order to executive decision-making. Worse, they argue, he aggressively advocated and implemented harsh immigration measures, including separating migrant children from their parents on the border last summer, that quickly ran aground or were reversed in the courts.

Kelly said he decided it was time to leave after the Nov. 6 midterm election, which saw heavy Republican losses in Congress and statehouses. On Dec. 14, Trump named Mick Mulvaney, his budget director, as acting chief of staff.

When Kelly was asked why he stayed 18 months in the White House, he said simply: duty.

"Military people," he said, "don't walk away."

Warren takes key step toward 2020 presidential run

Bloomberg

Sen. Elizabeth Warren took a major step on Monday toward an all-but-certain 2020 White House run, seeking to become the Democratic nominee to challenge President Donald Trump on a message of economic equality and fighting corruption.

The Massachusetts progressive said in a New Year's Eve email and video message to supporters that she's launching an exploratory committee for a presidential run, which would give her a potential early edge in fundraising and organization. She said American families were "under attack from every direction," due to a government that's "bought and paid for by a bunch of billionaires and giant corporations that think they get to dictate the rules."

Warren previewed her populist message in a recent interview with Bloomberg News.

"I'm in this fight for hard-working families. And that means reducing the student loan debt burden, increasing our Social Security payments for those who depend most on it, and the overarching piece, re-

ducing corruption in government," the senator said.

"Right now, Washington works great for the wealthy and the well-connected, it's just not working for much of anyone else," Warren added.

Warren, who handily won a second six-year Senate term in November, has become a polarizing figure due to her aggressive criticisms of Wall Street, her support for raising taxes on rich Americans to mitigate income inequality, and her push to regulate large corporations that often depicts as preying on ordinary people.

But that same advocacy, which dates back to her time as a Harvard law professor, has endeared her to a progressive base full of voters who are hungry for a sharp left turn by the Democratic Party.

"She was doing populist economics before everybody thought it was cool. So she has a background and message that has met its moment," said Mary Anne Marsh, a Democratic consultant based in Boston, who argued that Warren is a front-runner because "she's spent the better part of the last 18 months laying the groundwork for

this moment."

Her likely path to the nomination would require winning a mix of women, progressives and non-white voters, Marsh said.

Warren faces demographic and geographical challenges. She'll be 70 in February 2020 at the start of nominating contests, which will feature scores of millennial and non-white voters who want candidates that are culturally relevant to them. She may face several African-American opponents in a party where black voters have been decisive in picking the presidential nominee in the last two open contests — Hillary Clinton in 2016, and Barack Obama in 2008.

And Warren also faces a biographical challenge. She's been derisively labeled "Pocahontas" by Trump for her self-proclaimed Native American heritage. Seeking to quell the criticism, Warren in October released a DNA test showing evidence, a move that only provoked more pushback from Cherokee Nation and other advocates, who said it's wrong and inappropriate to claim Native American identity on the basis of blood.

NATION

President Donald Trump arrives for a campaign rally at Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport in Belgrade, Mont., on Nov. 3.

PHOTOS BY EVAN VUCCI/AP

What a yuge year!

N. Korea, Kavanaugh, all those Trump tweets and more in 2018

BY CALVIN WOODWARD
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The stranger-than-sitcom American presidency opened 2018 with a big tease about mutual nuclear destruction from two leaders who then found "love" not war. It seems President Donald Trump and North Korea's Kim Jong Un were just playing hard to get.

The presidency ends the year saturated in tumult, with the government in partial shutdown and Trump tweeting a video of himself warbling a parody of the theme song from "Green Acres," a **COMMENT** television sitcom from the 1960s, to mark his signing of a farm bill.

Throw in a beer-loving and very angry Supreme Court nominee, an unhappy departing defense secretary, Trump's parallel universe of facts and his zillion tweets, and you can see that the president's world this year was touched by the weird, the traumatic and the fantastical — also known as WTF.

There was no holding back the self-described "very stable genius" with the "very, very large brain."

Some serious and relatively conventional things got done in 2018.

There was a midterm election. Many more Democrats are coming to Congress and not quite all of them plan to run for president. Divided government dawns in January when Democrats take control of the House; Republicans retain their grip on the Senate.

An overhaul of the criminal justice system was accomplished, and in an unusually bipartisan way, though it took a dash of reality TV's Kim Kardashian West to move it along. Gun control actually was tightened a bit, with Trump's unilateral banning of bump stocks.

Trump shocked allies and lost Defense Secretary Jim Mattis over a presidential decision to pull U.S. troops out of Syria, quickly following up with indications that up to half the troops in Afghanistan might be withdrawn, too.

Self-described "Tariff Man" started one trade war, with China, and headed off a second by tweaking the North American Free Trade Agreement and giving it an unpronounceable acronym, USMCA. He withdrew the U.S. from the Iran nuclear deal, putting action behind his Twitter shout: "WE ARE NO LONGER A COUNTRY THAT WILL STAND FOR YOUR DEMENTED WORDS OF VIOLENCE & DEATH."

Trump placed his second justice on the Supreme Court in two years after Brett Kavanaugh, accused of alcohol-fueled sexual assault in his youth, raged against the allegations at a congressional hearing and acknowledged only: "I liked beer, I still like beer," but "I never sexually assaulted anyone."

There were frustrations and fulminations aplenty for the president, particularly about the steaming-ahead Russia-Trump campaign investigation by special counsel Robert Mueller.

Nor did he make much progress on his promised border wall, which he renamed "artistically designed steel slats" in December in what he regarded as a concession to wall-despising, concrete-cursing Democrats. The concession did not work: large parts of the government closed Dec. 22 over the wall-induced budget impasse.

He took heat for a zero-tolerance policy that forced migrant children from their parents until he backed off, inaccurately blaming Democrats for "Child Seperation."

It was a very good year for jobs. It was a check-your-smartphone-right-now, pass-the-smelling-salts year for the stock market. Trump, who assailed the unemployment rate as a phony measure when he was a candidate, couldn't speak of it enough as Obama-era job growth continued on his watch. He went mum about the market, a prime subject for his boasting before it took a sustained dive.

Trump's approval rating in polls was one of the few constants on this swiftly tilting planet: 42 percent approval and 56 percent disapproval in The Associated Press-NORC's latest and 38 percent-57 percent via Gallup, neither much different than in January.

Through it all, the mainstreaming of the bizarre proceeded apace and North Korea's Kim set that tone right on Jan. 1 with his New Year cheer to Americans across the ocean: "It's not a mere threat but a reality that I have a nuclear button on the desk in my office. All of the mainland United States is within the range of our nuclear strike."

Trump responded the next day with a tweet about size and performance. "I too have a Nuclear Button, but it is a much bigger & more powerful one than his, and my Button works!"

Once they got that out of their system, things quickly improved, helped along by Kim's letters to Trump, which the U.S. president called "beautiful." There was no more talk about Trump being a "mentally deranged dotard" or Kim being a "maniac." In June, they held history's first meeting between a North Korean leader and a current U.S. president. "We fell in love," Trump later said at a West Virginia rally.

Kim had previously vowed to visit "fire and fury" on the U.S. but the "Fire and Fury" that made Trump livid early in the year was the book of the same name, Michael Wolff's insider account of the Trump White House. That was a different sort of missile. The president took particular exception to observations in the book by his former chief strategist, tweeting about "Sloppy Steve Bannon, who cried when he got fired and begged for his job. Now Sloppy Steve has been dumped like a dog by almost everyone. Too bad!"

They are said to be on better terms now.

Over the course of the year, Trump spoke at more than 40 campaign rallies, kept up his Twitter barrage (40,000 tweets since 2009 on his @realDonaldTrump account) and answered plenty of questions in infrequent but lengthy news conferences and sit-down interviews.

So what stands out in this blizzardy whiteout of unconventionality?

How about this farewell to his secretary of state,

U.S. President Donald Trump shakes hands with North Korea leader Kim Jong Un on June 12, at the Capella resort on Sentosa Island, in Singapore.

Rex Tillerson? "He was dumb as a rock and I couldn't get rid of him fast enough. He was lazy as hell." (The president usually reserves "dumb as a rock" for journalists.)

Or his description of Stormy Daniels, paid to stay quiet about their alleged affair, as "horseface?"

Will history long remember that in 2018 the president called Democratic Rep. Adam Schiff "little Adam Schitt" on Twitter and nations in Africa "shithole countries" in a private meeting?

Or that he (correctly) predicted Hurricane Florence would be "tremendously wet" or told the AP: "I have a natural instinct for science?"

In July, Trump appeared to side with Russian President Vladimir Putin when he stood by Putin's side at a Helsinki summit news conference and gave weight to Putin's denial that Russia meddled in the 2016 election, despite the firm conclusion of U.S. intelligence agencies that it had. "I don't see any reason why it would be" Russia, Trump said.

But while it's been hardly noticed in a capital consumed by the shutdown drama, Mattis, Syria, steel slats and market convulsions, 2018 draws to a close as it started — with warnings of a nuclear Armageddon, this time from Putin.

Putin's prompt was Trump's intention to walk away from one arms control treaty and his reluctance to extend another.

That, said Putin, "could lead to the destruction of civilization as a whole and maybe even our planet."

Maybe he's just playing hard to get.

NATION

2018 in a word: List calls for collusion ban

College releases annual grouping of overused terms

By Jeff Karoub
Associated Press

DETROIT — No collusion! (Or at least a lot less of it.)

That's according to a Michigan school's latest "List of Words Banished from the Queen's English for Mis-use, Over-use and General Uselessness."

The politically charged term at the center of special prosecutor Robert Mueller's investigation into whether President Donald Trump's campaign coordinated with Russia is among 18 entries on Lake Superior State University's 44th annual list, which was released Monday.

University spokesman John Shibley said the school received about 3,000 votes through its website and Facebook pages. Although Trump has repeatedly tweeted that there was "no collusion" and "collusion" was among the top-three vote-getters — along with "wheelhouse and "in the books" — its inclusion should not be interpreted as a political statement by the listmakers. Rather, voters apparently were just irritated by hearing and reading the word so often in the past year, he said.

"I can usually read a political nomination when I see it," he said. "If I saw a string of trolls trying to pack the ballot box for political reasons, I would have caught it."

The other words or expressions to make the list are "wrap my head around," "grapple," "optics," "eschew" and "thought leader." Also submitted by the public for the pyre of popular parlance: "platform," "ghosting," "yeet," "litigate," "crusty," "legally drunk," "importantly" and "accoutrements."

Two other political entries also made it: "Most important election of our time" and "OTUS" acronyms such as POTUS — for President of the United States. The acronyms that have found their way onto cable news shows date back to the late 19th century when POTUS and SCOTUS (Supreme Court of the United States) were used as telegraph codes, according to Merriam-Webster. FLOTUS, for the first lady, first appeared in the 1980s.

Among the newest terms — yet one the curators feel has outlived its usefulness — is "yeet," which variously refers to the name of a dance, a taunt, an excited acknowledgement or throwing something. Other words are commonly known in one setting, such as "litigate" among lawyers but get trotted out by some politicians and pundits for hashing out "any matter of controversy," according to one submission.

The list is meant to be in fun, but it's bound to raise some hackles.

There was a "whiff" of legal concern back in 1994 when officials from the Los Angeles Lakers objected to the list's inclusion of "three-peat," Shibley said. The team's coach at the time, Hall of Famer Pat Riley, owned the trademark. Eventually, the team officials dropped their objections
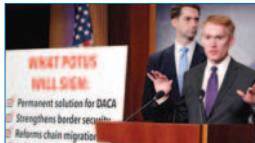
Alex Brandon/AP

Sen. James Lankford, R-Okla., speaks in February next to a board featuring the word POTUS, which made Lake Superior State University's list of banished words.

after determining that its inclusion on the list wasn't "commercially flagrant."

Some members of the public were upset at the 2002 inclusion of "9-11," which received thousands of votes for banishment, Shibley said. It was deemed by nominators as "too much (of) a shorthand" for the tragic terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, but people misunderstood and thought the school was "thumbing our noses at 9/11," he said.

Shibley said that with the rise of social media and ever-more-divisive politics, people have even "shorter fuses," which means he and his colleagues tread carefully. After all, the aim of the list isn't to inflame but to entertain.

"Hopefully (it) helps diffuse some of the animus out there — not by laughing at ourselves, but by laughing at how language sometimes backs us into some absurdly funny corners," he said.

There's no overlap between this year's list and 2018 word-of-the-year pronouncements by Merriam-Webster ("justice") and Oxford Dictionaries ("toxic").

Still, the Michigan school did ban "toxic assets" in 2010 and "bring them to justice" or "bring the evil-doers to justice" in 2010.

List of 18 words to ban

Lake Superior State University's 44th annual list of words nominated for banishment by members of the public:

- Wheelhouse
- In the books
- Wrap my head around
- Platform
- Collusion
- OTUS family of acronyms (such as POTUS, FLOTUS, SCOTUS)
- Ghosting
- Yeet
- Litigate
- Grapple
- Eschew
- Crusty
- Optics
- Legally drunk
- Thought leader
- Importantly
- Accoutrements
- Most important election of our time

SOURCE: The Associated Press

NATION

Looking for U-turns on mean streets

Violence Interrupters hope they can stop crime with open dialogue

BY PETER HERMANN
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — The boys, barely in their teens, were angry. A young man they knew had been shot dead.

Robbie Merritt was not the first man from around their Southeast Washington neighborhood who had recently been killed. Just the latest.

There was J Rock. Popcorn. Reagle. Butter Rock. Black. Carno.

The nicknames were rattled off by Duane Cunningham, a 46-year-old city worker. With a promise of pizza, he had gathered the group of teens at a neighborhood recreation center on a rainy fall evening to talk about life in this sliver of neighborhoods in the far southern tip of the District and about what would come next.

His looming — yet unstated — question to the group: Were there threats to avenge Robbie's death?

"Have any of you ever felt like you need to have a gun in your life?" he asked.

A smattering of hands went up.

"Get him before he gets me," said a ninth-grader, his voice barely audible, the studs in his ears gleaming under a hoodie pulled up over his head.

Whether youthful swagger or simple fact, the ease and proficiency in which the 14-year-old and his friends talked about guns shows how much a part of life they are in some city neighborhoods. Cunningham pressed the teen for more.

The former drug dealer has reinvented himself as one of more than a dozen "Violence Interrupters" in the District, trying to stop shootings before they happen. It is a tough job with homicides mounting and approaching the number reached in 2015, when a summer surge of shootings ended nearly a decade of declines in killings.

Inside the safe confines of the Ferebee Hope Recreation Center, the youth shrugged in the direction of the front door, where a security guard clad in body armor and distracted by his smartphone stood sentry.

Outside, drab low-slung public housing cubes stretched on in Washington Highlands, known here by the name of one notorious street — Condon Terrace.

Out there, the boys said, they needed to protect themselves.

Out there, the 14-year-old said, "It's real."

Cunningham grew up in Anacostia and sold drugs along Good Hope Road during the 1980s crack epidemic.

He was 18 the first time he was locked up, the same year he dropped out of high school. He went to prison in 1990, the year then-Mayor Marion Barry was arrested smoking crack, the year 474 people were slain in the District during its most murderous era. Cunningham served 10 years in prison, most of them in the long-closed Lorton prison.

The father of five said he did what he had to do to get by, but he also "regrets that I helped destroy my community."

With a stocky build, black or multicolored kufi and a flash of the heavy silver chain he wears to mark his prison conversion to Islam, Cunningham exudes the cred of a man who has occupied city blocks and cell blocks. While he was selling drugs and in prison, people called him "Cousin Wayne." The nickname stuck.

These days, he starts work after commuters have gone home, drawing up to $45,000 a year as one of 18 Violence Interrupters, the District's new front line in combating violence. The program is part of the Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement, launched in 2017 as Mayor Muriel E. Bowser's $5.4 million yearly investment to combat crime in ways traditional police cannot.

Cunningham interacts very little with police. A school resource officer may tip him off to a fight that could escalate outside the classroom, but he does not investigate crime or help those who do.

"My job is to make sure it don't go no further," he said.

Similar initiatives have been started in Baltimore, Chicago and some other cities.

Photos by MARVIN JOSEPH, The Washington Post/AP

Duane Cunningham is a member of DC's Violence Interrupters in Washington. The group imbeds in violent DC neighborhoods to try and stop shootings before they happen.

> **'It's tough out there, but at the end of the day, they don't have to live this life. They just don't know it.'**
>
> **Duane Cunningham**
> *A member of DC's Violence Interrupters*

The impact is hard to measure — a dispute quieted, anger channeled elsewhere, retaliation that is never carried out. But city leaders hope small success stories eventually will show up in the broader violent crime numbers, which for now are trending the wrong way.

So Cunningham and the other interrupters spend time in neighborhoods, talking and listening.

Cunningham drives around in his used 2001 black Chevrolet Tahoe, now burdened with 322,000 miles, hitting the hot spots — back alleys and streets — finding ways to connect with people.

"It's tough out here, but at the end of the day, they don't have to live this life," Cunningham said. "They just don't know it. Their dad is in jail. Their moms are spending their checks on the street. These kids are trying to feed their families. It's not like they woke up one morning and said, 'I'm going to kill somebody.' "

Cunningham says his generation let down the one that followed. "A lot of us went to jail, so we weren't here to take care of our kids," he said. "The kids thought this was the best way to live because they saw us making all this money back in the day."

When the young people listen, he said, he tells them about various programs the District offers, even to felons, to get their lives on track.

Two men who knew Cunningham from his old days looked on.

Bryan Williams, who grew up in Anacostia, summed up the challenge:

"He got to get in the hotheads' heads."

The Benning Terrace field is more than a place to play football. It is a safe haven between rival neighborhoods.

So one night in early November, kids ages 5 to 14, who make up the three football teams, picked up signs instead of gear.

Cunningham organized a march through the hidden pathways and cuts of Simple City, the name of a ruthless gang from the '90s that has long defined this place.

"Let me live in Peace," one placard read.

"What has violence solved? Nothing," read another.

Five miles away, at the Ferebee Hope Recreation Center, the group of teens confronted the divisions and alliances that often sparked violence.

"What happens when you go to their store?" Cunningham asked the group.

"You get shot," a young man answered.

"What happens when they come to your store?" Cunningham asked.

"They get shot," the same boy answered.

Cunningham has met with these young men before, one-on-one, pressing each to take advantage of programs offered through the city, the schools and the recreation center. This day, he challenged their tough talk.

"What do loafing mean?" Cunningham asked.

"Like you're beefing. All tens," the 14-year-old answered.

"Tell me what all tens means?"

"Be prepared."

"Where your gun gonna be at?"

The youth formed his right hand into a gun and held it next to his waistband.

But Cunningham had brought in a ringer. Tameka Merritt, Robert "Robbie" Merritt's mother, was listening. Robbie had been shot in October at age 26. He hung out at the rec center, too, and all the teens knew him.

She jumped in.

"You all really need to get it together," the 47-year-old told them, her voice rising. "You know who's carrying guns around here. You know who they want to beat up. Get away from them."

Cunningham told them to be smart and stay away from trouble. That means staying away from the store. The corners. Older boys with guns. Weed. The dark.

He asked them about Robbie and the others. "When they woke up that morning, did they think they was gonna die that day? How do you know you're not going to die tomorrow?"

The teen in the hoodie answered.

"I don't think they knew they were gonna die, but it happens here."

Tameka Merritt, who lost two sons to violence, talks to youths at the Ferebee Hope Recreation Center in Washington.

WORLD

Section of Russian apartment caves in; at least 4 killed

Associated Press

MOSCOW — At least four people died Monday when sections of an apartment building collapsed after an apparent gas explosion in Russia's Ural Mountains region, officials said, and hundreds of rescuers are searching for survivors under the debris.

The authorities said five people were hospitalized with injuries, and 38 other residents remained unaccounted for in the accident in Magnitogorsk, a city of 400,000 people about 870 miles southeast of Moscow.

The nation's top investigative agency, the Investigative Committee, said the collapse of a section of the 10-story building was apparently caused by a gas leak. It happened before dawn when most residents were still asleep on New Year's Eve.

Nearly 1,400 rescuers were searching for those who could have been buried under debris in temperatures of 1.4 degrees Fahrenheit, which were forecast to plunge to -17 degrees Fahrenheit overnight. Emergency officials admitted they were racing against time as the frigid weather reduces the chances to find anyone alive.

Local authorities initially said 68 of those registered in the collapsed section of the building were unaccounted for, but they later tracked down some of them.

Magnitogorsk Mayor Sergei Berdnikov told the Tass news agency that 38 people are still missing, adding that it wasn't clear if they were in the building when it collapsed.

Emergency workers have evacuated residents of nearby sections of the building, fearing they could also tumble down.

The Kremlin said President Vladimir Putin has been briefed on the situation. Cabinet officials arrived in Magnitogorsk to oversee the rescue efforts.

Gas explosions in Russian homes and businesses are common, and they are usually blamed on neglect of safety rules or poor maintenance.

CHELYABINSK REGION GOVERNOR PRESS SERVICE/AP

Russian emergency services crews work the scene of a collapsed section of an apartment building in Magnitogorsk, which is near the Ural Mountains about 870 miles southeast of Moscow, on Monday.

US citizen arrested on spying charges in Russia

MOSCOW — Russia's domestic security agency says it has arrested a U.S. citizen on espionage charges.

The Federal Security Service, or FSB, the top KGB successor agency, said the American man was detained in Moscow on Friday. The agency said in Monday's statement that he was caught "during an espionage operation," but didn't give any details.

The state Tass news agency identified the detained man as Paul Whelan. Spying charges carry a prison sentence of up to 20 years in Russia.

The U.S. Embassy in Moscow had no immediate comment.

The arrest comes as Russia-U.S. ties have sunk to post-Cold War lows over the Ukrainian crisis, the war in Syria and the allegations of Russian meddling in the 2016 U.S. presidential election.

Congo counts ballots in presidential election

KINSHASA, Congo — Congo's election officials are counting votes Monday in a presidential election that the opposition and observers say has had numerous irregularities.

The ballot counting and compiling is taking place across this vast Central African country after an election day beset by problems but in which many Congolese showed a calm determination to register their votes.

Election observers reported multiple difficulties in voting for a successor to President Joseph Kabila, who is stepping down after 17 years in power. The election had been delayed since late 2016, prompting the opposition to charge that Kabila was trying to stay on past his mandate.

Congo's presidential election is hoped to be the country's first peaceful, democratic transfer of power since independence from Belgium in 1960. The official results are to be announced on Jan. 15, although preliminary results are expected before then.

Life resumed to normal in Kinshasa, the capital, after voting day, during which electoral officials rushed voting lists to polling stations across the city. Many polls stayed open in the night to allow those waiting in line to cast their ballots.

Among some 21 candidates, top opposition leaders Martin Fayulu and Felix Tshisekedi are challenging Kabila's preferred successor, former Interior Minister Emmanuel Ramazani Shadary, who is under European Union sanctions for a crackdown on people protesting election delays.

From The Associated Press

Bomb blast at Philippine mall kills at least 2

Associated Press

COTABATO, Philippines — Suspected Muslim militants remotely detonated a bomb near the entrance of a mall in the southern Philippines on Monday as people did last-minute shopping ahead of New Year's Eve celebrations, killing at least two and wounding nearly 30, officials said.

The bomb went off near a baggage counter at the entrance of the South Seas mall in Cotabato city, wounding shoppers, vendors and commuters. Authorities recovered another unexploded bomb nearby as government forces imposed a security lockdown in the city, military and police officials said.

Maj. Gen. Cirilito Sobejana said by phone that an initial investigation showed the design of the bomb was similar to those used in the past by local Muslim militants who have pledged allegiance to Islamic State.

RAINIER CANOSO/AP

Investigators examine the South Seas Mall in Cotabato, southern Philippines, following an explosion on New Year's Eve on Monday.

Government forces launched an offensive against the militants belonging to a group called Daulah Islamiyah last week, and at least seven of the militants died in the fighting, Sobejana said.

"This is a part of the retaliation, but the problem is they're victimizing innocent civilians," he told reporters.

Superintendent Romeo Galgo Jr., the deputy police director of Cotabato, said witnesses saw a man leave a box in a crowded area near the mall's entrance where vendors and shoppers were milling. The explosion shattered glass panels and scattered debris to the street fronting the mall.

Two of the roughly 30 people hit by the blast died while being brought to a hospital, Sobejana said.

Cotabato Mayor Cynthia Guiani-Sayadi condemned the bombing and called on residents to help fight terrorism.

"This is not just another terroristic act but an act against humanity. I cannot fathom how such evil exists in this time of merry-making," she said.

"It is unimaginable how some people can start the new year with an act of cruelty. But no matter how you threaten us, the people of Cotabato are resilient. ... We will stand up against terrorism," she told reporters.

The bombing is the latest in a number of attacks blamed on militants in the volatile region.

Bangladesh ruling coalition declared winner of disputed election

Associated Press

DHAKA, Bangladesh — Bangladesh's ruling alliance won virtually every parliamentary seat in the country's general election, according to official results released Monday, giving Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina a third straight term despite allegations of intimidation and the opposition disputing the outcome.

The coalition led by Hasina's Awami League party won 288 out of 300 seats — 96 percent — in Sunday's polls, Election Commission Secretary Helal Uddin Ahmed said. The opposition alliance led by prominent lawyer Kamal Hossain won only seven seats.

The opposition rejected the outcome, with Hossain calling the election "farcical" and demanding a new election be held under the authority of a "nonpartisan government."

But Chief Election Commissioner K.M. Nurul Huda ruled out any revote, saying there were no reports of large irregularities.

"There is no scope to hold the election again," Huda said. He said the turnout in Sunday's vote was 80 percent.

Hasina's main rival for decades has been former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, the leader of the opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party, whom a court deemed ineligible to run for office because she is in prison for alleged corruption.

In Zia's absence, opposition parties formed a coalition led by Hossain, 82, a former member of Hasina's Awami League.
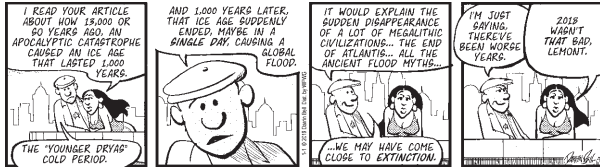
Eugene Sheffer Crossword
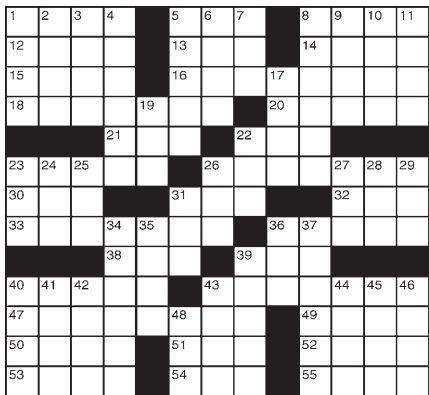
ACROSS
1 Nile vipers
5 Cistern
8 Sprint
12 Guitarist Atkins
13 — -de-France
14 Formerly
15 Antelope's playmate
16 Its days are numbered
18 Degree of excellence
20 Endures
21 "Nova" airer
22 Lass
23 Regions
26 Volcanic crater
30 "Entourage" agent
31 Branch
32 Felon's flight
33 Trinidad music
36 Fountain drinks
38 Fine, at NASA
39 Marry
40 Dishonor
43 Actor Rory
47 Squid dish
49 Big fair, for short
50 "Oops!"
51 Drench
52 Peruse
53 Facts and figures
54 Guitar master Paul
55 Tolkien creatures

DOWN
1 Outlet letters
2 The Mets' old home
3 Rind
4 American flag feature
5 Bad habits
6 Winged
7 Aviv preceder
8 Disney duck
9 &&&&
10 Ella's style
11 Towel word
17 Israeli airline
19 Small ammo
22 Leg, in slang
23 Efron of "Parkland"
24 Man-mouse link
25 Zero
26 — -Magnon
27 Right angle
28 Squealer
29 Early hrs.
31 Request
34 Motorcycle maker
35 "The Raven," for one
36 Actor Gibson
37 Stick
39 Is patient
40 Gulf War missile
41 "Funny!"
42 Oodles
43 Manitoba tribe
44 They can take a yoke
45 — the crack of dawn
46 Agrees silently
48 Piercing tool

Answer to Previous Puzzle

S	C	A	R		T	O	M		M	A	N	S
E	L	S	E		I	R	A		O	D	E	A
R	E	A	P		P	A	R	T	Y	H	A	T
B	O	P	E	E	P		S	H	E	E	T	S
		A	M	Y	S			E	R	S		
P	A	R	T	I	T	A	S		S	I	G	H
R	A	E		T	O	R	T	E		V	E	E
O	A	H	U		P	A	R	T	N	E	R	S
		E	N	E		H	U	T	U			
S	N	A	I	L	S		D	A	T	I	N	G
P	A	R	T	I	C	L	E		M	O	O	R
U	R	S	A		O	I	L		E	T	R	E
R	Y	E	S		T	D	S		G	A	M	Y

1-1 CRYPTOQUIP

X G O Y   Q D L   K J T W M Z I O   E G O

S D D O Q   I Z K W D L E   E A O Z E   Q D L

X O A O   T Y Z I V J Y S   D Y ,   E G Z E

K Z V O T   Q D L   Z   T ' K D A O   M D T O A .

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: STUDENT AT HOGWARTS WHO ALWAYS HAD PROTRUDING LIPS AND A REALLY SULKY LOOK: HARRY POUTER.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: K equals M
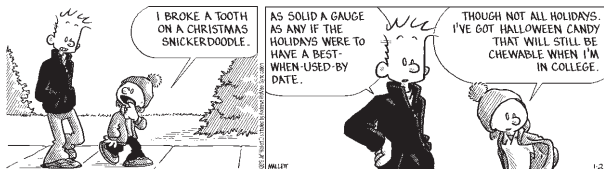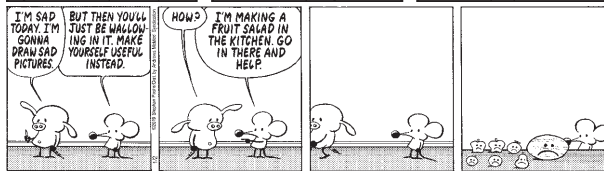
Eugene Sheffer Crossword
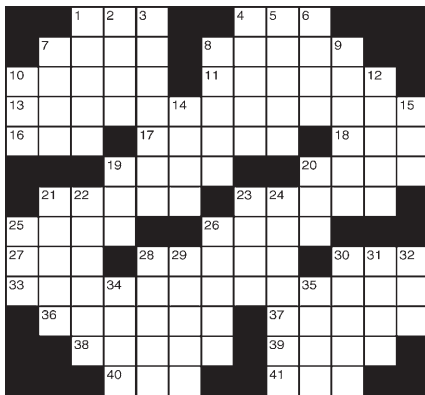
ACROSS

1 Opening
4 Cartoon frame
7 Vend
8 "Dallas" matriarch
10 Sleep problem
11 Court hammers
13 1998 Bruce Willis thriller
16 Shock partner
17 Hoodwinks
18 Water tester
19 Gum flavor
20 Roll call reply
21 Fry lightly
23 Belted area
25 Cooking fat
26 Uttered
27 Chemical suffix
28 Up and about
30 Quilters' get-together
33 Wimbledon champ of 2008
36 Wife of Jacob
37 Edition
38 Nodded off
39 D.C. baseball team
40 Picnic crasher
41 Ram's mate

DOWN

1 Category
2 Sir Guinness
3 Enthusiastic approval
4 County of Ireland
5 Graceland idol
6 Fibs
7 Gush
8 Pharaoh's land
9 Upper crust
10 Docs' org.
12 Bull's sound
14 Ancient letter
15 "My word!"
19 Wet dirt
20 Secreted
21 Less loony
22 Sports venues
23 Banshee's cry
24 Delta, for one
25 Actress Tyler
26 Long-legged shorebird
28 Wan
29 Used a broom
30 Butter up the turkey
31 Flightless birds
32 Compass pt.
34 Bruins' sch.
35 Caesar's "vidi"

Answer to Previous Puzzle

A	S	P	S		V	A	T		D	A	S	H
C	H	E	T		I	L	E		O	N	C	E
D	E	E	R		C	A	L	E	N	D	A	R
C	A	L	I	B	E	R		L	A	S	T	S
			P	B	S		G	A	L			
Z	O	N	E	S		C	A	L	D	E	R	A
A	R	I		A	R	M			L	A	M	
C	A	L	Y	P	S	O		M	A	L	T	S
		A	O	K		W	E	D				
S	H	A	M	E		C	A	L	H	O	U	N
C	A	L	A	M	A	R	I		E	X	P	O
U	H	O	H		W	E	T		R	E	A	D
D	A	T	A		L	E	S		E	N	T	S

1-2   CRYPTOQUIP

BV   X   KXZR   KWYXL   WY

IWUFRY   HRYR   QBFQZL

YRVBURC   XUC   KXUURYZL,

HQXP   HWDZC   LWD   IXZZ   BP?

FRUP   RRZ.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN YOU MISPLACE THE GOOEY CAMPOUT TREAT YOU WERE SNACKING ON, THAT MAKES YOU A S'MORE LOSER.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Z equals L

OPINION

If we ease up, ISIS could attack us again

By Michael Morell
and Mike Vickers
Special to The Washington Post

We were both deeply involved in our nation's fight against al-Qaida and its early fight against Islamic State, and we both believe it is imperative that President Donald Trump remember what we consider to be the most important lesson of counterterrorism — the ability of a terrorist group to quickly regenerate if the pressure on it is reduced. The pattern is clear: If we do not keep the pressure on ISIS and other groups, we believe we will again face a threat to our homeland.

We saw this pattern repeatedly during our careers — always with potentially devastating consequences. When the United States drove al-Qaida out of Afghanistan in the fall of 2001, the group went to prearranged safe houses in the urban areas of Pakistan, where it continued to conduct aggressive attack planning. Over the next year, the CIA, with the assistance of Pakistani intelligence, systematically captured many al-Qaida members, including a number of the group's senior leaders, and significantly reduced the group's capabilities to attack us.

The remnants of al-Qaida then moved again, this time in 2003 to tribal areas of Pakistan — in a remote region along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border where the Pakistani government has limited control, and where the group was no longer under pressure from the U.S. or Pakistani governments.

Without that pressure, the group's capabilities to attack us rebounded. By the summer of 2005, al-Qaida directed and organized the July 2005 London bombings. And by the summer of 2006, al-Qaida was able again to catastrophically attack the United States. Only excellent work by the U.S., British and Pakistani intelligence services prevented a plan to detonate explosives on 10 to 15 airliners traveling to the United States from London's Heathrow Airport. In response, the George W. Bush administration began, and the Obama administration continued, an aggressive, five-year counterterrorism operation along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border that significantly weakened al-Qaida.

A similar dynamic took place in Yemen. In the aftermath of 9/11, an al-Qaida-associated group there grew in size and threat — the outgrowth of a senior al-Qaida leader fleeing South Asia for the Arabian Peninsula. It conducted several attacks. The United States, working with the Yemeni government, was able to bring the group under control by arresting and imprisoning most of its leadership. But then a massive prison break in February 2006 allowed the group to re-establish itself.

Within 24 months of the prison break, al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula — or AQAP, as it is known — was again a threat to the West, conducting two attacks on the U.S. Embassy in Sanaa in 2008, nearly bringing down a U.S. airliner flying to Detroit on Christmas Day in 2009, coming close to detonating sophisticated explosives packed in printer cartridges on two U.S. cargo flights in 2010, and nearly putting an individual wearing a nonmetallic suicide vest on a U.S. aircraft in 2011. The Obama administration acted quickly, weakening the group with a military campaign, an operation that continues today.

ISIS was, in part, an outgrowth of the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq at the end of 2011. When the U.S. military departed the country, al-Qaida in Iraq (AQI), the predecessor organization to ISIS, was largely — although not completely — defeated, the work of the Bush and Obama administrations, along with the support of the Iraqi government. When we left, there were only a few thousand AQI members remaining, most of them in hiding.

Without U.S. military support, AQI began to bounce back almost immediately. It grew because the Iraqi military was much less effective without U.S. support; because the Iraqi prime minister at the time, Nouri al-Maliki, was reluctant to accept U.S. intelligence support; and because al-Maliki, freed of U.S. oversight, became more sectarian and authoritarian, alienating Iraqi Sunnis and driving them toward AQI. By the time of the Syrian civil war and AQI's journey across the border to join the fight, the group, now calling itself ISIS, was so capable that it dominated the Syrian battlefield, where it gained even more strength.

What does this key lesson mean for today? It means the U.S. and its coalition must keep the pressure on the tens of thousands of ISIS members who remain in Iraq and Syria. It means we need to do the same in Afghanistan, where the remnants of al-Qaida work closely with the resurgent Taliban. And it means we must keep the pressure on al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula in Yemen.

If we do not do these things, the U.S. will face, in a short period of time, a dangerous threat from these groups, to include a threat to the homeland. As he makes decisions regarding the Middle East and South Asia, the president needs to take account of the regenerative capability of these groups if he is to fulfill his No. 1 responsibility: protecting the American people.

Washington Post contributing columnist Michael Morell was CIA deputy director from 2010 to 2013 and twice acting director during that time. Mike Vickers is a former Special Forces officer and CIA operations officer. He served in the George W. Bush and Obama administrations, including as undersecretary of defense for intelligence.

Japan-US missile defense effort has strategic value

By Arthur I. Cyr
Special to Stars and Stripes

The United States has carried out a successful test of an advanced land-based anti-ballistic missile (ABM). This triumph on Dec. 10, quickly announced publicly by the U.S. Missile Defense Agency, has remained largely under the radar of global media preoccupied with markets and trade conflicts, along with political debates largely removed from military defense and security. That is unfortunate.

A U.S. land-based Raytheon Aegis missile intercepted an intermediate-range ballistic missile in flight. The test occurred near Hawaii in the Pacific Ocean. The highly sophisticated missile results from a large-scale joint project with Japan.

North Korea's long-term development of weapons has heightened tensions in and around the Korean Peninsula. In response, the U.S. in 2009 deployed a Lockheed Martin THAAD (Terminal High Altitude Air Defense) anti-missile system to protect Hawaii, a possible target. There have been similar tensions in Europe in relation to Russia.

In September 2017, the U.S. put a THAAD system in South Korea. THAAD has more limited area coverage than Aegis.

"Hitting a bullet with a bullet" is the way even proponents of anti-missile systems describe the extraordinary technical challenge. Yet there have been sustained pressures within the U.S. to build such weapons for more than a half century, dating back to the 1950s and the Eisenhower administration. At that time, defense spending absorbed more than half the entire federal budget, and a much larger percentage of gross domestic product than today. President Dwight D. Eisenhower maintained control over the military primarily, though not exclusively, by putting an overall ceiling on the Pentagon budget, effectively setting the Air Force, Army and Navy against one another for available resources.

The efforts of the Army to remain a significant participant in atomic weapons at times took rather unusual forms. One of the most bizarre nuclear weapons ever developed was the M65 atomic cannon, nicknamed "Atomic Annie" for obscure reasons, though perhaps derived from the nickname "Anzio Annie" given to a pair of devastating German K5 guns deployed against the Allied invasion of Italy in World War II. The U.S. first fielded the atomic cannon in 1953 and deployed the weapon in Western Europe and South Korea. The enormous size of the cannon may have intimidated Cold War opponents but definitely created public relations challenges for local U.S. Army personnel. Especially in West Germany, there were regularly complaints resulting from buildings and other structures sideswiped or crushed by the big gun.

One byproduct of the Eisenhower approach was considerable duplication of effort. Each service developed a separate strategic missile program, jealously guarding research and development information from the others. Defense Secretary Robert McNamara in the Kennedy administration was instantly offended by the lack of logic in this approach and decisively imposed organization-chart order. The Air Force was given land-based strategic missiles, the Navy sea-based submarine systems, and the Army was removed from the game.

The secretary and his civilian analysts also rejected arguments for anti-ballistic missiles because any conceivable defensive systems could be overwhelmed at relatively low cost by simply increasing the number of attack vehicles. Under then-prevalent U.S. strategic concepts, hardening missile sites was stabilizing but protecting populations was not. If a nuclear Pearl Harbor was being planned, there was no point in protecting missile launchers that would be empty.

McNamara's policies and style quickly unified the services against him. The Army pressed successfully for an ABM role. When President Lyndon Johnson forced the secretary to resign, he made him president of the World Bank but also insisted on public support for the ABM.

President Ronald Reagan gave priority to exotic space-based missile interceptors, termed the Strategic Defense Initiative or "Star Wars." The Air Force became the leading service but the entire Joint Chiefs of Staff endorsed the effort. Reagan and Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger were prime exponents.

Anti-missile deployments in Asia and Europe are prudent given threats from North Korea and elsewhere. In the late 1960s, nuclear weapons strategist Herman Kahn emphasized dangers from such rogue states, partly to support the publicly humiliated McNamara.

Additionally, there are potential positive opportunities in the current missile situation. South Korea as well as Japan and the U.S. may develop expanded diplomatic as well as security cooperation, including and reaching well beyond North Korea.

Arthur I. Cyr is Clausen Distinguished Professor at Carthage College in Wisconsin and author of "After the Cold War."

Looking at the news

A weekly sampling of U.S. editorial cartoons

LISA BENSON/Washington Post Writers Group

LISA BENSON/Washington Post Writers Group
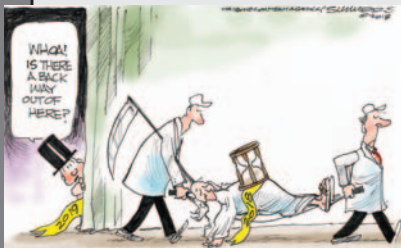
DANA SUMMERS/Tribune Content Agency

LISA BENSON/Washington Post Writers Group
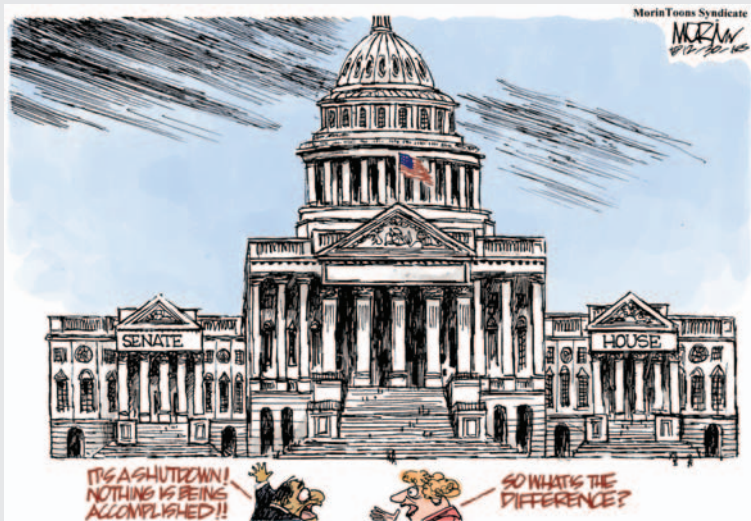
JIM MORIN/MorinToons Syndicate

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Fires, shootings appear to be part of family feud

MS MONTICELLO — A southwest Mississippi sheriff said a family feud appears to have spurred multiple shootings and two fires over the last week.

No one's been reported injured, but Lawrence County Sheriff Lessie Butler told The Daily Leader of Brookhaven that he fears violence will lead to someone dying. The problem, Butler said, is that no one will tell his deputies who's responsible.

The trouble began Dec. 21 with reports of shots fired in the Oma community, about 12 miles north of Monticello. Then a home burned down early the next morning. More shots were reported later that morning, and a mobile home burned on Christmas.

Then last Wednesday, deputies were told a crowd had gathered at the first fire's site, but no one was around when authorities arrived.

Suspect in theft does TV interview, arrested

NY ROCHESTER — A New York bartender's TV interview led to his arrest after sheriff's deputies recognized him as the suspect in a grand larceny case.

The Rochester Democrat and Chronicle reported that Anthony Lamarca was arrested Friday after appearing on WUHF's "Good Day Rochester" the day before.

The Ontario County Sheriff's Office said Lamarca had been wanted for third-degree grand larceny for more than a year.

Lamarca was interviewed for a segment about the New Year's Eve party at the Rochester restaurant where he works.

Dog alerts sleeping owners of house fire

NH BARNSTEAD — Officials say a dog saved a New Hampshire couple when a fire swept through a home that had no working smoke detectors in the town of Barnstead.

Deputy Fire Chief John Drew said the occupants were sound asleep but were alerted to the impending disaster by their deaf dog.

He said the entire house was ablaze by the time firefighters arrived early Saturday, and he told WMUR-TV: "That dog saved their life."

Drew said several other pets died in the blaze and the home was destroyed.

Man says kick, stomps saves him from coyote

SC FORT MILL — A South Carolina man said some swift kicks and stomps saved him from a coyote attack.

John Somjak said he was taking corn cobs to a wildlife camera he set up in the woods behind a friend's home in Fort Mill when the coyote ran toward him at about 4:30 p.m. Wednesday.

Somjak told The Herald, of Rock Hill, that he dropped the sack of corn cobs but the coyote ignored it and kept coming.

So Somjak said he kicked the animal under the chin and stomped it several times. He thought it was dead, but after returning to get a knife, the coyote charged him again. Somjak said he used the knife to kill the animal.

Wind knocks over tree at park, killing woman

TN GATLINBURG — A woman from Texas was killed by a tree knocked down by high winds in Great Smoky Mountains National Park in Tennessee.

Park spokesman Mike Litterst said Saturday that Laila Jiwani, 42, was hiking with her husband and three children on Porter Creek Trail on Thursday when the tree fell.

Litterst said one of the children was injured. The spokesman said the 6-year-old was airlifted to a hospital with injuries that weren't life-threatening.

In a Facebook post, Jiwani's husband, Taufiq, wrote that their son suffered a broken leg and superficial head injuries during a "simple/safe" hike.

Inmate who escaped from prison caught

CA SAN QUENTIN — California authorities on a nearly four-day manhunt for an inmate who walked away from San Quentin State Prison captured him Saturday.

Officials from the state Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation said they took Shalom Mendoza, 21, into custody at a fast-food restaurant without incident. He was taken to the Salinas Valley State Prison.

A resident alerted authorities after seeing Mendoza at the restaurant in Paso Robles, more than 200 miles southeast of the prison.

He's suspected of carjacking a vehicle in a store parking lot less than a mile from the prison after fleeing a work assignment outside the prison walls. He was reported missing at just after 9:30 p.m. last Wednesday.

140 people evacuated from chairlift at resort

MT KALISPELL — A Montana ski resort says it safely evacuated 140 people from a chairlift after a mechanical problem prompted operators to stop the lift.

The Flathead Beacon reported that it took 2½ hours to remove everyone from Whitefish Mountain Resort's Chair 5 on Saturday.

Resort officials said they decided to evacuate the passengers because of the time the repairs would require.

Some people were lowered from the lift with cables and harnesses. Resort officials said temperatures were in the high teens and winds were blowing at about 10 mph at the time.

The resort said no one was injured. The ski patrol carried out the evacuation.

Marker for lynching spot vandalized again

GA VALDOSTA — A marker identifying the location of one of the most gruesome lynchings in Georgia history has been vandalized for a second time.

The Valdosta Daily Times reported the Mary Turner and Lynching Rampage historical marker was riddled with bullet holes for the second time in five years. An email sent to the newspaper Thursday by Mark Patrick George, Mary Turner Project coordinator, said the marker was shot 13 times in the last two to three months. It was shot five times in July 2013.

The marker is dedicated to 13 lynching victims killed in Lowndes and Brooks counties.

From wire reports

THE CENSUS

8 The number of times a Waukesha, Wis., man has been arrested for operating a vehicle while intoxicated. The Racine County Sheriff's Office said Friday that the man was pulled over after a deputy paced him driving 100 mph. An investigation showed that the man had seven previous operating while intoxicated convictions and a revoked driving status. Officials say the man also had a felony warrant. Authorities say he followed requests to complete a field sobriety test and was then arrested for his eighth intoxicated driving offense.

Bob Brown, The Richmond (Va.) Times-Dispatch/AP

Providing cover for man's best friend

Kenny Trail and his dog, Rocky, head down Gay Avenue near Gallmeyer's Pumpkin Patch in Henrico County, Va., on Friday as heavy rain moved through the area. Trail said he and Rocky have been "houseless," not homeless, for about seven years and usually sleep in the tent he carries. He said he was a first-class transmission lineman for 20 years before he decided to take up his current lifestyle.

FACES

BEST of the WORST

Josh Brolin as Thanos in "Avengers: Infinity War"
Marvel Studios

These movie villains entertained us with their evil ways in 2018

BY SONIA RAO ■ *The Washington Post*

Just when you thought you'd seen the last of these year-end pop culture lists, we throw another one at you. Sorry! We can't help it. Some of the characters below made us scream. Some of them made us laugh. All of them made us wonder whether it's actually more fun for actors to play the bad guys. So before we meet next year's Hot Jafar or evil Jake Gyllenhaal, let us take a moment to revisit the 10 best movie villains of 2018, ordered alphabetically by movie title.

Warning: Some of the blurbs below contain spoilers. Villainy strikes again!

Thanos (Josh Brolin) in 'Avengers: Infinity War'

Thanos excels at accumulating shiny stones that contain ridiculous amounts of power. With a single snap of his fingers, he can obliterate half the universe's population. If Captain America and his powerful beard cannot stop you, we're not sure anyone can.

Erik Killmonger (Michael B. Jordan) in 'Black Panther'

King T'Challa chooses to uphold Wakanda's isolationist policies to keep its citizens safe, but his American cousin Erik Killmonger, who aims to liberate black people worldwide, sees this as selfish. Some argued that Killmonger's ideals — if not his extreme hunger for power — were admirable.

Ben (Steven Yeun) in 'Burning'

"Burning" is well-written, but Steven Yeun's acting is what landed Ben — a mysterious rich man who serves as romantic rival to the film's protagonist — on this list. Ben's every action is effortlessly sinister, even when he isn't talking about his habit of burning down abandoned greenhouses.

Robert Harley (Nicholas Hoult) in 'The Favourite'

Robert Harley's 18th-century calculating politician does all the things traditional bad guys do — and well: He manipulates the lead characters by exploiting their weaknesses, ticks them off with snippy digs, and does it all in fabulously elaborate costumes.

Joan (Ann Dowd) in 'Hereditary'

For how kind Ann Dowd seems in real life, she sure does a good job of terrifying audiences. The veteran actress, who won an Emmy last year for playing the wicked Aunt Lydia in "The Handmaid's Tale," is believably possessed by a devilish spirit over the course of "Hereditary." Joan wasn't technically the horror flick's main villain, but we wouldn't drink tea at her home anytime soon.

August Walker (Henry Cavill) in 'Mission: Impossible - Fallout'

The big and actually surprising reveal of "Fallout" is that CIA agent August Walker is actually John Lark, a man who aims to kill off a large portion of the world's population. "There cannot be peace without, first, a great suffering," Lark states in a manifesto that could easily have been written by Thanos. Cavill's excellent deadpan makes his villainy all the more unsettling, proof that it does the actor well to step away from playing a caped superhero every so often.

Phoenix Buchanan (Hugh Grant) in 'Paddington 2'

Some of the best villains are those who surprise you, and "Paddington 2" features Hugh Grant, of all people, skulking around in a nun's costume while plotting against an innocent Peruvian bear. He also leads a song-and-dance number that takes place in a pastel-colored prison. Need we say more?

Steve Lift (Armie Hammer) in 'Sorry to Bother You'

"Sorry to Bother You," about a black telemarketer who speaks in his "white voice" to achieve professional success, is very ambitious in the number of social issues it attempts to tackle, and the evils of capitalism rank high. Armie Hammer plays Steve Lift, the psychopathic CEO of a morally bankrupt company — essentially, the most 2018 villain of all.

Venom (Tom Hardy) in 'Venom'

"Venom" is among the most ridiculous movies of 2018, emphasized by the dialogue between journalist Eddie Brock (Tom Hardy) and the alien parasite that merges with his body. But that's also what makes it so great. Between the parasite telling Eddie that he, too, was a "loser" on his home planet — we love an underdog! — and his actual voice in Eddie's head nearing the intensity of Christian Bale's Batman voice, Venom carries what might be one of the most enjoyable bad movies of recent film history.

Jatemme Manning (Daniel Kaluuya) in 'Widows'

Daniel Kaluuya's character Jatemme is ruthless, willing to do whatever it takes to keep Chicago mobsters loyal to his crime boss brother, Jamal, who is running for city council. As we learned in "Get Out," Kaluuya has perfected the art of conveying emotion — or a lack thereof, in Jatemme's case — through his eyes, rather than just his words.

'Aquaman' still swimming strong between holidays

Associated Press

In the final weekend of 2018, "Aquaman" still led the pack at the box office, but other films like "Mary Poppins Returns," "The Mule" and "Second Act" enjoyed post-holiday bumps too, even amid an onslaught of new Christmas offerings like "Vice," "Holmes and Watson" and "On the Basis of Sex."

Warner Bros. said Sunday that "Aquaman" added an estimated $51.6 million in North American ticket sales over the weekend to take first place again. Down just 24 percent from its domestic debut, the DC Comics pic, which has been No. 1 internationally for four weeks, has now grossed nearly $748.8 million worldwide.

Although other films in theaters were left in "Aquaman's" wake, more than a few in the top 10 experienced an uncommon uptick in returns this weekend. Disney's "Mary Poppins Returns" ended the weekend up an estimated 19 percent, in second place, with $28 million, while "Bumblebee," down only five percent, settled in third with $20.5 million.

Up 11 percent, "Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse" got fourth with $18.3 million, and "The Mule," up 24 percent, took fifth with $11.8 million.

The Jennifer Lopez-led "Second Act," which got off to a slow start last weekend, also found itself up 11 percent, with $7.2 million in seventh place. But the biggest bump of all came for Disney's "Ralph Breaks the Internet," which was up nearly 40 percent in its sixth weekend in theaters, with $6.5 million.

"Vice," starring Christian Bale as the former Vice President, came out on top for the new films, grossing $7.8 million from the weekend and $17.7 million since its Christmas opening.

Driven by the star power of Will Ferrell and John C. Reilly, "Holmes and Watson" managed to take in $7.3 million despite negative audience and critic reviews. The Sony film has grossed $19.7 million since Christmas Day. And in limited release, the Ruth Bader Ginsburg film "On the Basis of Sex" starring Felicity Jones grossed $690,000 from 33 locations for a total of $1.5 million since its debut.

Other news

■ A member of the R&B group Pretty Ricky faces a DUI charge in Miami Beach, Fla. According to a police report, Marcus Ramone Cooper was speeding over 100 mph Dec. 28 when he was stopped. The singer known as **Pleasure P** had a blood alcohol level that was twice Florida's legal limit. The "Love & Hip Hop Miami" cast member was charged with DUI, driving with a suspended license, reckless driving and resisting arrest.

■ British actress and comedic star **June Whitfield**, whose long career included memorable roles in TV series "Absolutely Fabulous" and "Terry and June," died Dec. 28. She was 93.

SHIFTING GEARS

Worth a look

2019 Genesis G70 is for real — and other luxury automakers better take notice

BY ROBERT DUFFER
Chicago Tribune

After the third drive in the excellent all-new 2019 Genesis G70 compact sedan, a memory from the 2016 Chicago Auto Show floor returned. Overheard was one dude saying to another dude, "There's Hyundai." And the other dude scoffed and said, "Why bother," as if it were 30 years earlier when the South Korean automaker broke into the American market with the low-quality, budget Excel. I wanted to tell Dude how much Hyundai had evolved, but Dude was confident in his opinion.

And he must not have made the connection when, later on the show floor, he and almost everyone else was gawking at the automaker's stunning concept: the Genesis Vision G luxury coupe.

There was a lot of skepticism then about Hyundai launching a distinct luxury brand, as Honda had done with Acura, Nissan with Infiniti and Toyota with Lexus. It takes a long time to correct that skepticism. Roughly three years in with a third model out, the Genesis G70 compact sedan announces without a doubt that the Genesis brand makes very good cars.

Unfortunately, for now, Hyundai doesn't make a crossover, but another one of those is the last thing the market needs. Yet the market doesn't really want cars, either, so the G90 full-size sedan and G80 midsize

sedan probably didn't worry the established premium and luxury automakers.

But the G70 should.

As long as there is a 3-Series, there will be a market for sporty compact sedans that crossovers can't touch. The G70 hits all the right marks, with handling that makes you

2019 Genesis G70 AWD Prestige

Vehicle type: Compact luxury sedan
Base price: $45,750
Price as tested: $50,000 (excluding $995 destination)
Powertrain: 365-horsepower 3.3-liter twin-turbo V-6
Transmission: Eight-speed automatic in AWD
EPA fuel economy rating: 18 mpg city/25 highway/20 combined

TNS

smile, and acceleration that makes you forget any worries you may be escaping or approaching. And, in a direct shot at the Germans and all the other luxury players, the options are streamlined into simple, loaded packages.

Genesis knows everything has to be well-executed to turn consumers away from the established luxury players, so the little things matter.

Take this particular small thing that charmed every passenger, from retiree to grade-schooler. On the inside part of the passenger's seat, above and across the center console, are two buttons to slide the seat forward, or fold the seatback. The driver or the rear seat passenger can press it without much effort. It gets people — and especially kids — in and out of the rear seat easier without scuffing that beautiful white quilted interior trim. But it also lets the driver move the seat back when picking up larger passengers. It's such a small thing, but such a lovely convenience.

The G70 looks sharp without trying too hard to stand out. A broad honeycomb grille complements the long hood and short overhangs for a low, muscular profile. The high beltline and coupelike roofline nip some headroom in the rear seats for the sake of dynamic design. In short, the car looks good, and you'll look good getting in and out of it.

Genesis carries what it calls "athletic elegance" into the inside. Quilted nappa

leather seats and door panels blend with the brushed aluminum trim pieces to create a sophisticated cabin that isn't ostentatious. The only Hyundai family resemblance is the infotainment system, which is simple to use and not overburdened with submenus. This easy-to-use effectiveness applies to high-fidelity voice commands and advanced driver assistance systems including adaptive cruise control and lane keep assist.

The real charm is behind the wheel. The 365-horsepower 3.3-liter twin turbo V-6 with a smooth, eight-speed automatic (six-speed manual is optional on four-cylinder rear-wheel drive) in all-wheel drive packs a potent and efficient punch. The various drive modes from eco to sport adjust throttle response, so it doesn't take much to floor it in sport mode and hit 60 mph in 4.5 seconds, according to Genesis. It's essentially the same powertrain as the larger, heavier Kia Stinger.

Turbo lag is minimal, steering is direct and the G70 soaks up the road while still staying close to it. There's no lean but plenty of mean in the G70 with Prestige trim.

The question is whether it exceeds the class benchmark, the BMW 3-Series. The new M340i is a tad quicker but expected to be about $10,000 more. But whatever the case, if you're in the market for a luxury sport sedan, checking out the G70 is worth your while. Don't be that dude hung up on dated misconceptions.

BUSINESS/WEATHER

New laws to raise minimum wage in several states

Prices expected to rise as employers pay workers more

By David A. Lieb
Associated Press

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. — At Granny Shaffer's restaurant in Joplin, owner Mike Wiggins is reprinting the menus to reflect the 5, 10 or 20 cents added to each item.

A two-egg breakfast will cost an extra dime, at $7.39. The price of a three-piece fried chicken dinner will go up 20 cents, to $8.78. The reason: Missouri's minimum wage is rising.

Wiggins said the price hikes are necessary to help offset an estimated $10,000 to $12,000 in additional annual pay to his staff as a result of a new minimum wage law taking effect Tuesday.

"For us it's very simple. There's no big pot of money out there to get the money out of" for the required pay raises, Wiggins said.

New minimum wage requirements will take effect in 20 states and nearly two dozen cities around the start of the new year, affecting millions of workers. The state wage hikes range from an extra nickel per hour in Alaska to a $1-an-hour bump in Maine, Massachusetts and for California employers with more than 25 workers.

Seattle's largest employers will have to pay workers at least $16 an hour starting Tuesday. In New York City, many businesses will have to pay at least $15 an hour as of Monday. That's more than twice the federal minimum of $7.25 an hour.

ROGER NOMER, THE JOPLIN (MO.) GLOBE/AP

Shawna Green, waitress at Granny Shaffer's, puts out menus for customers at the restaurant Dec. 18 in Joplin, Mo. Wages will be increasing for millions of low-income workers across the U.S. as the new year ushers in new laws in numerous states.

A variety of other new state laws also take effect Tuesday. Those include revisions to sexual harassment policies stemming from the #MeToo movement, restrictions on gun sales following deadly mass shootings and revamped criminal penalties as officials readjust the balance between punishment and rehabilitation.

The state and local wage laws come amid a multiyear push by unions and liberal advocacy groups to raise the minimum wage to $15 an hour nationwide. Few are there yet, but many states have ratcheted up wages through phased-in laws and adjustments for inflation.

In Arkansas and Missouri, voters this fall approved ballot initiatives raising the minimum wage after state legislators did not. In Missouri, the minimum wage will rise from $7.85 to $8.60 an hour on Tuesday as the first of five annual increases that will take it to $12 an hour by 2023.

At Granny Shaffer's in Joplin, waitress Shawna Green will see her base pay go up. But she has mixed emotions about it.

"We'll have regulars, and they will notice, and they will bring it to our attention, like it's our fault and our doings" that menu prices are increasing, she said. "They'll back off on something, and it's usually their tips, or they don't come as often."

Economic studies on minimum wage increases have shown that some workers do benefit, while others might see their work hours reduced. Businesses may place a higher value on experienced workers, making it more challenging for entry-level employees to find jobs.

Seattle, the fastest-growing large city in the U.S., has been at the forefront of the movement for higher minimum wages. A local ordinance raised the minimum wage to as much as $11 an hour in 2015, then as much as $13 in 2016, depending on the size of the employer and whether it provided health insurance.

A series of studies by the University of Washington has produced evolving conclusions.

In May, the researchers determined that Seattle's initial increase to $11 an hour had an insignificant effect on employment but that the hike to $13 an hour resulted in "a large drop in employment." They said the higher minimum wage led to a 6.9 percent decline in the hours worked for those earning under $19 an hour, resulting in a net reduction in paychecks.

In October, however, those same researchers reached a contrasting conclusion. They said Seattle workers employed at low wages experienced a modest reduction in hours worked after the minimum wage increased, but nonetheless saw a net increase in average pretax earnings of $10 a week. That gain generally went to those who already had been working more hours while those who had been working less saw no significant change in their overall earnings.

Both supporters and opponents of higher minimum wages have pointed to the Seattle studies.

The federal minimum wage was last raised in 2009. Since then, 29 states, the District of Columbia and dozens of other cities and counties have set minimum wages above the federal floor. Some have repeatedly raised their rates.

"The federal minimum wage has really become irrelevant," said Michael Saltsman, managing director of the Employment Policies Institute, a Washington, D.C.-based group that receives funding from businesses and opposes minimum wage increases.

The new state minimum wage laws could affect about 5.3 million workers who are currently earning less than the new standards, according to the liberal-leaning Economic Policy Institute, based in Washington, D.C. That equates to almost 8 percent of the workforce in those 20 states but doesn't account for additional minimum wage increases in some cities.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates

Euro costs (Jan. 2)	$1.1788
Dollar buys (Jan. 2)	€0.8483
British pound (Jan. 2)	$1.30
Japanese yen (Jan. 2)	108.00
South Korean won (Jan. 2)	1,083.00

Commercial rates

Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3770
Britain (Pound)	$1.2801
Canada (Dollar)	1.3642
China (Yuan)	6.8785
Denmark (Krone)	6.5302
Egypt (Pound)	17.9102
Euro	$1.1435/0.8745
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.8330
Hungary (Forint)	280.62
Israel (Shekel)	3.7495
Japan (Yen)	110.02
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3036
Norway (Krone)	8.6986
Philippines (Peso)	52.49
Poland (Zloty)	3.76
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7512
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3633
South Korea (Won)	1,115.16
Switzerland (Franc)	0.9866
Thailand (Baht)	32.38
Turkey (Lira)	5.2959

(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany), check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	5.50
Discount rate	3.00
Federal funds market rate	2.40
3-month bill	2.33
30-year bond	3.04

WEATHER OUTLOOK

TUESDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

RUSSIA
KAZAKHSTAN
GEORGIA
UZBEKISTAN
AZERBAIJAN
KYRGYZSTAN
TURKEY
Caspian Sea
TURKMENISTAN
TAJIKISTAN
Kabul 48/30
Baghdad 64/48
IRAQ
IRAN
AFGHANISTAN
Kandahar 63/36
Kuwait City 65/53
Bahrain 73/62
PAKISTAN
QATAR
Riyadh 69/55
Doha 74/63
U.A.E.
SAUDI ARABIA
OMAN
YEMEN
Arabian Sea
Djibouti 84/74
Gulf of Aden

TUESDAY IN EUROPE

ICELAND
NORWAY
SWEDEN
FINLAND
ESTONIA
RUSSIA
LATVIA
UNITED KINGDOM
LITHUANIA
Mildenhall/Lakenheath 50/35
BELARUS
GERMANY
POLAND
Brussels 48/38
Ramstein 41/36
UKRAINE
Lajes, Azores 64/61
Stuttgart 41/33
Pápa 40/36
AUSTRIA
ROMANIA
Aviano 42/36
Vicenza 46/32
FRANCE
SERBIA
BULGARIA
SPAIN
ITALY
Naples 49/33
PORTUGAL
Morón 65/36
GREECE
Sigonella 57/42
Rota 64/40
SICILY
Souda Bay 56/46

WEDNESDAY IN THE PACIFIC

CHINA
RUSSIA
N. KOREA
Misawa 35/25
Seoul 32/12
Sea of Japan
JAPAN
Osan 31/11
KOREA
Busan 41/28
Iwakuni 39/29
Tokyo 50/39
Sasebo 42/33
Pacific Ocean
Guam 87/80
Okinawa 67/59
Philippine Sea

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SCOREBOARD

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Deals

Sunday's transactions

BASEBALL
American League
LOS ANGELES ANGELS — Designated RHP Austin Brice for assignment. Agreed to terms with C Jonathan Lucroy on a one-year contract.
TORONTO BLUE JAYS — Acquired cash considerations from San Diego for OF Connor Panas. Designated RHP Oliver Drake for assignment.

BASKETBALL
National Basketball Association
ATLANTA HAWKS — Assigned F Omari Spellman to Erie (NBAGL). Transferred F Alex Poythress to Erie.
DENVER NUGGETS — Waived G Nick Young.
MEMPHIS GRIZZLIES — Waived G/F D.J. Stephens.

FOOTBALL
National Football League
NEW YORK JETS — Fired coach Todd Bowles.
TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS — Fired coach Dirk Koetter.

HOCKEY
National Hockey League
BOSTON BRUINS — Assigned F Jesse Gabrielle from Providence (AHL) to Wichita (ECHL).
CHICAGO BLACKHAWKS — Acquired F Drake Caggiula and D Jason Garrison from Edmonton for Ds Brandon Manning and Robin Norell.
DALLAS STARS — Assigned G Colton Point from Texas (AHL) to Idaho (ECHL).
EDMONTON OILERS — Traded D Chris Wideman and a conditional 2019 third-round draft pick to Florida for D Alexander Petrovic.
LOS ANGELES KINGS — Assigned F Michael Amadio to Ontario (AHL).
PITTSBURGH PENGUINS — Assigned G John Muse from Wilkes-Barre/Scranton (AHL) to Wheeling (ECHL).
ST. LOUIS BLUES — Assigned G Jordan Binnington to San Antonio (AHL). Recalled G Evan Fitzpatrick from San Antonio.

SOCCER
Major League Soccer
ATLANTA UNITED — Signed D Brek Shea to a one-year contract.
COLLEGE
FLORIDA — CB Jawaan Taylor will enter the NFL draft.
HOUSTON — Fired football coach Major Applewhite.
INDIANA — Announced the retirement of associate head football coach Mike DeBord.
MIAMI — Announced the retirement of football coach Mark Richt. Named Manny Diaz football coach.

Boxing

Fight schedule

Jan. 11
At Shreveport, La., Devin Haney vs. Xolisani Ndongeni, 10, lightweights.
Jan. 12
At Los Angeles, Jose Uzcategui vs. Caleb Plant, 12, for Uzcategui's IBF super middleweight title; Brandon Figueroa vs. Moises Flores, 10, featherweights; Ahmed Elbiali vs. Allan Green, 10, light heavyweights; Hugo Centeno Jr. vs. Juan De Angel, 10, middleweights.
Jan. 18
At Verona, N.Y., Bryant Jennings vs. Oscar Rivas, 12, for Jennings' IBF International heavyweight title; Carlos Adames vs. Paul Valenzuela Jr., 10, super welterweights.
At Madison Square Garden Theater, New York, Demetrius Andrade vs. Artur Akavov, 12, for Andrade's WBO middleweight title; Jorge Linares vs. Pablo Cesar Cano, 12, for Linares' WBC International Silver super lightweight title; Chris Algieri vs. Daniel Gonzalez, 10, welterweights.
Jan. 19
At MGM Grand, Las Vegas, Manny Pacquiao vs. Adrien Broner, 12, for Pacquiao's WBA welterweight title; Badou Jack vs. Marcus Browne, 12, for the WBA interim light heavyweight title; Rau'shee Warren vs. Nordine Oubaali, 12, for the vacant WBC bantamweight title; Jhack Tepora vs. Hugo Ruiz, 12, featherweights.
Jan. 26
At Barclays Center, New York, Keith Thurman vs. Josesito Lopez, 12, for Thurman's WBA Super World welterweight title; Adam Kownacki vs. Gerald Washington, 10, heavyweights.
At Houston, Jaime Munguia vs. Takeshi Inoue, 12, for Munguia's WBO junior middleweight title; Jesus Rojas vs. Xu Can, 12, for Rojas' WBA featherweight title; Lucas Fernandez vs. Joshua Franco, rematch, 10, bantamweights; Joshua Franco vs. Lucas Fernandez, 10, for the vacant NABF bantamweight title; Vergil Ortiz Jr. vs. Abraham Cordero, 10, super lightweights.

Tennis

Shenzhen Open

Sunday
At Longgang Tennis Center
Shenzhen, China
Purse: $750,000 (Intl.)
Surface: Hard-Outdoor
Singles
First Round
Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova (8), Russia, def. Magdalena Rybarikova, Slovakia, 6-4, 6-3.
Vera Zvonareva, Russia, def. Luksika Kumkhum, Thailand, 6-3, 6-3.
Wang Yafan, China, def. Anna Karolina Schmiedlova, Slovakia, 6-1, 6-0.

Sorana Cirstea, Romania, def. Magda Linette, Poland, 6-3, 6-3.
Evgeniya Rodina, Russia, def. Zarina Diyas, Kazakhstan, 3-6, 6-3, 7-6 (7).
Pauline Parmentier, France, def. Zheng Saisai (6), China, 6-2, 3-6, 6-2.
Doubles
First Round
Shuko Aoyama, Japan, and Lidziya Marozava (1), Belarus, def. Chen Jiahui and Wang Danni NI, China, 6-2, 6-4.
Irina Bara, Romania, and Oksana Kalashnikova, Georgia, def. Dalma Kovinic, Montenegro, and Yana Sizikova, Russia, 6-3, 6-1.

College basketball

Men's AP Top 25 fared

Sunday
1. Duke (11-1) did not play. Next: vs. Clemson, Saturday.
2. Michigan (13-0) beat Binghamton 74-52. Next: vs. Penn State, Thursday.
3. Tennessee (11-1) did not play. Next: vs. Georgia, Saturday.
4. Virginia (11-0) did not play. Next: vs. Marshall, Monday.
5. Kansas (11-1) did not play. Next: vs. No. 25 Oklahoma, Wednesday.
6. Nevada (13-0) did not play. Next: vs. Utah State, Wednesday.
7. Gonzaga (12-2) did not play. Next: vs. Cal State Bakersfield, Monday.
8. Michigan State (11-2) did not play. Next: vs. Northwestern, Wednesday.
9. Florida State (11-2) did not play. Next: vs. Winthrop, Tuesday.
10. Virginia Tech (11-1) did not play. Next: vs. Notre Dame, Tuesday.
11. Texas Tech (11-1) did not play. Next: at West Virginia, Wednesday.
12. Auburn (11-2) did not play. Next: at Mississippi, Wednesday, Jan. 9.
13. Ohio State (12-1) did not play. Next: vs. No. 8 Michigan State, Saturday.
14. North Carolina (9-3) did not play. Next: vs. Harvard, Wednesday.
15. Wisconsin (10-3) did not play. Next: vs. Minnesota, Thursday.
16. Kentucky (10-2) did not play. Next: at Alabama, Saturday.
17. Arizona State (9-3) did not play. Next: vs. Utah, Thursday.
18. Marquette (11-2) did not play. Next: at St. John's, Tuesday.
19. Mississippi State (12-1) did not play. Next: at South Carolina, Tuesday, Jan. 8.
20. N.C. State (12-1) did not play. Next: at Miami, Thursday.
21. Buffalo (12-1) did not play. Next: at Eastern Michigan, Friday.
22. Houston (13-0) did not play. Next: vs. Tulsa, Wednesday.
23. Indiana (11-2) did not play. Next: vs. Illinois, Thursday.
24. Iowa (11-2) did not play. Next: at Purdue, Thursday.
25. Oklahoma (11-1) did not play. Next: at No. 5 Kansas, Wednesday.

5. Oregon (11-1) did not play. Next: vs. Washington, Friday.
6. Stanford (10-1) did not play. Next: vs. Southern Cal, Friday.
7. Baylor (8-1) did not play. Next: vs. Texas-Rio Grande Valley, Monday.
8. Mississippi State (12-1) beat Louisiana-Lafayette 104-36. Next: at Arkansas, Thursday.
9. N.C. State (11-3) beat Davidson 75-45. Next: vs. Duke, Thursday.
10. Tennessee (11-1) beat Belmont 84-76. Next: at Auburn, Thursday.
11. Oregon State (10-2) did not play. Next: vs. Washington State, Friday.
12. Minnesota (12-0) did not play. Next: at Michigan, Wednesday.
13. Texas (10-2) did not play. Next: vs. Oklahoma State, Wednesday.
14. California (9-2) lost to Harvard 85-79. Next: vs. UCLA, Friday.
15. Syracuse (11-2) did not play. Next: at Clemson, Thursday.
16. Iowa (9-3) lost to No. 21 Michigan State 84-70. Next: vs. Nebraska, Thursday.
17. Arizona State (9-3) lost to Arizona 51-39. Next: at Utah, Friday.
18. Kentucky (13-1) did not play. Next: vs. Vanderbilt, Thursday.
19. DePaul (9-4) did not play. Next: vs. Providence, Monday.
20. Gonzaga (12-1) did not play. Next: at Pepperdine, Monday.
21. Michigan State (11-1) beat No. 16 Iowa 84-70. Next: at Northwestern, Thursday.
22. Marquette (10-3) did not play. Next: vs. Creighton, Monday.
23. Texas A&M (11-2) did not play. Next: vs. No. 25 South Carolina, Thursday.
24. Miami (12-3) lost to Central Michigan 90-80. Next: vs. Virginia Tech, Thursday.
25. South Carolina (8-4) beat Furman 66-53. Next: at No. 23 Texas A&M, Thursday.

Sunday's men's scores

EAST
Cornell 61, Navy 50
Dartmouth 78, New Hampshire 68
Delaware 82, Northeastern 80, 2OT
Hofstra 89, Drexel 75
Holy Cross 78, Iona 71
Rhode Island 72, Middle Tennessee 60
West Virginia 78, Lehigh 68
SOUTH
Charleston Southern 111, Piedmont International 65
Clemson 84, Lipscomb 67
Elon 68, James Madison 65
Georgia 91, UMass 72
N. Kentucky 73, Ill.-Chicago 58
NC Central 91, Wilberforce 64
Northwestern 86, Champion Christian 59
Presbyterian 72, Jacksonville 67
VCU 90, Rider 79
William & Mary 71, Towson 61
MIDWEST
Akron 82, Carnegie Mellon 55
Bowling Green 94, UT Martin 80
Cent. Michigan 123, Indiana University South Bend 76
Detroit 73, Cleveland St. 61
E. Illinois 81, North Alabama 70
Miami (Ohio) 70, Evansville 67
Michigan 74, Binghamton 52
Minnesota 71, Mount St. Mary's 53
Missouri St. 110, William Woods 56
Northwestern 75, Columbia 54
Oakland 76, Youngstown St. 74
Ohio 68, FIU 66
Oral Roberts 81, Nebraska-Omaha 84
Purdue Fort Wayne 90, N. Dakota St. 87, OT
SIU-Edwardsville 79, Missouri S&T 66
Saint Louis 83, Appalachian St. 55
W. Illinois 78, Denver 60
W. Michigan 73, UC Riverside 64
Wright St. 72, IUPUI 58
SOUTHWEST
Alabama 79, Stephen F. Austin 69
Cent. Arkansas 62, Lyon College 47
FAR WEST
Hawaii 71, Alabama A&M 63
New Mexico 103, University of the Southwest 47
New Mexico St. 88, Colorado St. 68
Southern Cal 73, UC San Diego 68

Women's AP Top 25 fared

Sunday
1. UConn (11-0) did not play. Next: at No. 7 Baylor, Thursday.
2. Notre Dame (12-1) beat Lehigh 95-68. Next: vs. Pittsburgh, Thursday.
3. Louisville (12-0) did not play. Next: vs. North Carolina, Thursday.
4. Maryland (12-0) did not play. Next: vs. Rutgers, Monday.

Sunday's women's scores

EAST
Army 74, Connecticut College 48
Chattanooga 66, Maine 61
Fordham 61, Middle Tennessee 49
Hartford 84, NJIT 53
Holy Cross 81, Bryant 62
James Madison 57, Robert Morris 36
Seton Hall 77, St. John's 67
Stony Brook 74, St. Francis Brooklyn 67
Temple 75, La Salle 47
UCF 49, Quinnipiac 45
SOUTH
Campbell 93, Columbia (SC) 46
Cent. Michigan 90, Miami 80
Duke 57, Florida Gulf Coast 41
Florida 70, Charleston Southern 60
Georgia Tech 81, Wofford 40
Houston 61, Southern Miss. 44
Jacksonville 73, FIU 62
LSU 76, South Florida 49
Louisiana-Monroe 70, Arkansas-Monticello 39
Mercer 61, UNC-Asheville 47
Mississippi St. 104, Louisiana-Lafayette 36
NC State 75, Davidson 45
South Carolina 66, Furman 53
Tennessee 84, Belmont 76
Tulane 78, Florida A&M 34
UAB 83, Alabama Huntsville 58
UNC-Wilmington 71, East Carolina 68
Virginia 65, Charlotte 61
Wake Forest 63, Norfolk St. 61
MIDWEST
Ball St. 99, Urbana 62
Bowling Green 63, Davis & Elkins 28
Brown 90, Chicago St. 65
Cleveland St. 67, Detroit 49
E. Illinois 61, North Alabama 48
E. Michigan 53, Northwood (MI) 39
IUPUI 70, N. Kentucky 48
Illinois St. 62, UMKC 55
Indiana St. 79, Davenport 43
Kansas 77, Vermont 36
Michigan St. 84, Iowa 70
Missouri 70, Arkansas St. 39
Missouri St. 48, UALR 44
North Dakota 79, Purdue Fort Wayne 60
Notre Dame 95, Lehigh 68
Oral Roberts 71, Nebraska-Omaha 56
SIU-Edwardsville 64, McKendree 63
South Dakota 61, N. Dakota St. 41
W. Illinois 87, Denver 78
Wichita St. 66, Savannah St. 50
Wright St. 79, Ill.-Chicago 46
Youngstown St. 69, Oakland 55
SOUTHWEST
Arkansas 76, Jackson St. 57
Oklahoma St. 36, Grambling St. 40
UTSA 86, Texas A&M-Kingsville 55
FAR WEST
Arizona 51, Arizona St. 39
Harvard 85, California 79
New Mexico St. 81, UC Santa Barbara 73
UCLA 72, Southern Cal 65
Utah 76, Colorado 61
Washington 79, Washington 76

College football

Bowl glance

Saturday, Dec. 15
Celebration Bowl
At Atlanta
N.C. A&T 24, Alcorn State 22
Cure Bowl
Orlando, Fla.
Tulane 41, Louisiana-Lafayette 24
New Mexico Bowl
Utah State 52, North Texas 13
Las Vegas Bowl
Fresno State 31, Arizona State 20
Camellia Bowl
Georgia Southern 23, Eastern Michigan 21

New Orleans Bowl
Appalachian State 37, Middle Tennessee 13
Tuesday, Dec. 18
Boca Raton (Fla.) Bowl
UAB 37, Northern Illinois 13
Wednesday, Dec. 19
Frisco (Texas) Bowl
Ohio 27, San Diego State 0
Thursday, Dec. 20
Gasparilla Bowl
Marshall 38, South Florida 20
Friday, Dec. 21
Bahamas Bowl
FIU 35, Toledo 32
Famous Idaho Potato Bowl
BYU 49, Western Michigan 18
Saturday, Dec. 22
Birmingham (Ala.) Bowl
Wake Forest 37, Memphis 34
Armed Forces Bowl
Fort Worth, Texas
Army 70, Houston 14
Dollar General Bowl
Mobile, Ala.
Troy 42, Buffalo 32
Hawaii Bowl
Honolulu
Louisiana Tech 31, Hawaii 14
SERVPRO First Responder Bowl
Boston College vs. Boise State, ccd., weather
Quick Lane Bowl
Detroit
Minnesota 34, Georgia Tech 10
Cheez-It Bowl
TCU 10, California 7, OT
Thursday, Dec. 27
Independence Bowl
Duke 56, Temple 27
Pinstripe Bowl
New York
Wisconsin 35, Miami 3
Texas Bowl
Houston
Baylor 45, Vanderbilt 38
Friday, Dec. 28
Music City Bowl
Nashville, Tenn.
Auburn 63, Purdue 14
Camping World Bowl
Orlando, Fla.
Syracuse 34, West Virginia 18
Alamo Bowl
San Antonio
Washington State 28, Iowa State 26
Saturday, Dec. 29
Peach Bowl
Atlanta
Florida 41, Michigan 15
Belk Bowl
Charlotte, N.C.
Virginia 28, South Carolina 0
Arizona Bowl
Tucson, Ariz.
Nevada 16, Arkansas State 13, OT
Cotton Bowl Classic
Arlington, Texas
CFP Semifinal, Clemson 30, Notre Dame 3
Orange Bowl
Miami Gardens, Fla.
CFP Semifinal, Alabama 45, Oklahoma 34
Monday, Dec. 31
Military Bowl
Annapolis, Md.
Cincinnati (10-2) vs. Virginia Tech (6-6)
Sun Bowl
El Paso, Texas
Stanford (8-4) vs. Pittsburgh (7-6)
Redbox Bowl
Santa Clara, Calif.
Michigan State (7-5) vs. Oregon (8-4)
Liberty Bowl
Memphis, Tenn.
Missouri (8-4) vs. Oklahoma State (6-6)
Holiday Bowl
San Diego
Northwestern (8-5) vs. Utah (9-4)
Gator Bowl
Jacksonville, Fla.
NC State (9-3) vs. Texas A&M (8-4)
Tuesday, Jan. 1
Outback Bowl
Tampa, Fla.
Mississippi State (8-4) vs. Iowa (8-4)
Citrus Bowl
Orlando, Fla.
Kentucky (9-3) vs. Penn State (9-3)
Fiesta Bowl
Glendale, Ariz.
LSU (9-3) vs. UCF (12-0)
Rose Bowl
Pasadena, Calif.
Washington (10-3) vs. Ohio St. (12-1)
Sugar Bowl
New Orleans
Texas (9-4) vs. Georgia (11-2)
Monday, Jan. 7
College Football Championship
Santa Clara, Calif.
Clemson (14-0) vs. Alabama (14-0)
Saturday, Jan. 19
East-West Shrine Classic
At St. Petersburg, Fla.
East vs. West
NFLPA Collegiate Bowl
At Pasadena, Calif.
American vs. National, TBA
Saturday, Jan. 26
Senior Bowl
At Mobile, Ala.
North vs. South

College hockey

Sunday's scores

EAST
Brown 5, Army 3
New Hampshire 4, Bentley 3
Providence 5, Dartmouth 3
Robert Morris 3, American International 1
MIDWEST
Lake Superior St. 4, Michigan St. 3, OT
Michigan Tech 3, Michigan 2, OT
SUNY-Canton 6, Adrian 4
WEST
Air Force 6, Bemidji St. 3
EXHIBITION
Bowling Green 7, Windsor 3
Harvard 5, Concordia Montreal 1
Miami 3, Guelph 1

AP sportlight

Jan. 1
1902 — Michigan beats Stanford 49-0 in the first Rose Bowl. Neil Snow scores four touchdowns in a game that ends with eight minutes to play. The Wolverines earned the nickname as the "Point a Minute" team, having scored 500 points in their ten games. The next Rose Bowl game does not occur until 1916.
1916 — Washington State beats Brown 14-0 in the return of the Rose Bowl. Brown halfback Fritz Pollard, the first African-American to play in the Rose Bowl, gains just 47 yards in the rain-soaked game. After a scoreless first half, Washington State scores on short runs by Ralph Boone and Carl Dietz.
1934 — Columbia upsets Stanford 7-0 in the Rose Bowl when Al Barabas scores in the third quarter on a 17-yard hidden-ball play.
1935 — Bucknell beats Miami 26-0 in the first Orange Bowl.
1935 — Tulane beats Temple 20-14 in the first Sugar Bowl. The Green Wave complete a 14-0 comeback when Temple defender Horace Mowery tips a pass into the direction of Dick Hardy, who takes it in to the end zone.
1961 — The Houston Oilers beat the Los Angeles Chargers 24-16 to win the first AFL championship.
1961 — Boston Bruins rookie Willie O'Ree, the first black player in NHL history, scores his first goal in a 3-2 win over the Montreal Canadiens at Boston Garden.
1971 — Notre Dame ends Texas' 30-game winning streak with a 24-11 win in the Cotton Bowl.
1992 — Miami beats Nebraska 22-0 in the Orange Bowl, the first shutout of the Cornhuskers since 1973, and finishes with a 12-0 record.
1993 — No. 2 Alabama wins its first national championship in 13 years and deprives Miami of its fifth title as the Crimson Tide defense humbles the No. 1 Hurricanes 34-13 in the Sugar Bowl.
1993 — Florida State beats Nebraska 27-14 in the Orange Bowl to set an NCAA record by winning eight consecutive bowl games.
2000 — Georgia's Hap Hines kicks a 21-yard field goal in overtime to complete the greatest comeback in bowl history. The Bulldogs pull out a 28-25 victory over Purdue after trailing 25-0 early in the second quarter in the Outback Bowl.
2006 — New England's Doug Flutie converts the NFL's first successful drop kick in 64 years during a 28-26 loss to Miami.
2007 — Boise State, after tying the game with seven seconds to go in regulation, stuns No. 7 Oklahoma 43-42 in overtime to win the Fiesta Bowl. The No. 9 Broncos win on Ian Johnson's 2-point conversion run after receiver Vinny Perretta throws a fourth-down touchdown pass to Derek Schouman.
2008 — Sidney Crosby's shootout goal gives Pittsburgh a 2-1 win over the Buffalo Sabres in the inaugural outdoor Winter Classic in front of a league-record 71,217 fans. In elements way more suited for football than hockey, Crosby wins the NHL's second outdoor game — and first in the United States — in the most dramatic of fashion at Ralph Wilson Stadium, home to the NFL's Buffalo Bills.
2012 — Backup quarterback Matt Flynn throws for a franchise-record six touchdowns to give Green Bay a 45-41 victory over the Detroit Lions.
2014 — Central Florida pulls off one of the biggest upsets of the bowl season by outlasting No. 6 Baylor 52-42 in the Fiesta Bowl. It's the highest-scoring game in Fiesta Bowl history and second-highest BCS bowl ever.
2015 — Marcus Mariota and Oregon roll past defending national champion Florida State 59-20 to turn the first College Football Playoff semifinal into a Rose Bowl rout.
2015 — Cardale Jones turns in another savvy performance in his second collegiate start and Ezekiel Elliott runs for a Sugar Bowl-record 230 yards, leading Ohio State to a 42-35 upset of top-ranked Alabama in the second semifinal of the College Football Playoff.
2018 — Sony Michel's 27-yard touchdown run in double overtime gives Georgia a 54-48 win over Oklahoma in a Rose Bowl. It's the first overtime game in the 104-year history of the Rose Bowl, the highest-scoring Rose Bowl ever and the first College Football Playoff game to go into overtime.

NBA

Timberwolves center Karl-Anthony Towns drives to the basket as Heat center Bam Adebayo defends during the second half of Sunday's game in Miami. Towns scored 34 in Minnesota's 113-104 win.

LYNNE SLADKY/AP

Roundup

Towns, T-wolves top Heat

Associated Press

MIAMI — Karl-Anthony Towns scored 34 points and grabbed 18 rebounds, leading six Minnesota players in double figures as the Timberwolves defeated the Miami Heat 113-104 on Sunday night.

Towns added seven assists and six blocked shots for the Timberwolves. The only other player in NBA history to have that many points, rebounds, assists and blocks in the same game was Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, for the Los Angeles Lakers against Phoenix on Nov. 14, 1975. Abdul-Jabbar had 35 points, 19 rebounds, nine assists and eight blocks in that game.

Robert Covington scored 16 and Taj Gibson added 14 for Minnesota. The Wolves also got 13 apiece from Andrew Wiggins and Dario Saric, while Tyus Jones scored 12.

Dwyane Wade led Miami with 21 points. Josh Richardson scored 17, Derrick Jones Jr. added 16 and Hassan Whiteside grabbed 13 rebounds for the Heat.

Raptors 95, Bulls 89: Kawhi Leonard scored 27 points, Pascal Siakam had 20 points and 12 rebounds and host Toronto recorded its seventh straight win over Chicago.

Danny Green and Fred VanVleet each scored 10 points as the Raptors bounced back from their largest defeat of the season, a 29-point loss at Orlando on Friday.

Lauri Markkanen had 18 points and 10 rebounds and Wendell Carter Jr. had 16 points and 11 rebounds for the Bulls, who didn't score for the first 3:19 of the fourth quarter.

Chicago's Zach LaVine fouled out with 13 points. It was a poor shooting night for LaVine, who went 3-for-17, including 0-for-3 from three-point range.

Magic 109, Pistons 107: Evan Fournier's running jumper in the lane as the buzzer sounded gave Orlando a win over visiting Detroit.

Fournier's winning basket ended a wild finish in which Detroit wiped out an eight-point deficit in the final three minutes only to lose for the 11th time in their last 14 games.

Mavericks 105, Thunder 103: Teenage rookie Luka Doncic scored 25 points and young backcourt mate Dennis Smith Jr. hit the go-ahead layup in the final minute for host Dallas.

Paul George scored the last 13 points for Oklahoma City and finished with 36, but he missed a pull-up jumper over Smith with 2 seconds left in the first of two straight meetings on back-to-back nights for these regional rivals.

The Trail Blazers' C.J. McCollum, right, hits a shot over the Philadelphia 76ers' Mike Muscala on Sunday in Portland, Ore. McCollum made four three-pointers while going 13-for-18 from the floor to lead the Blazers in a 129-95 win.

STEVE DYKES/AP

Trail Blazers 129, 76ers 95: C.J. McCollum scored 35 points to break out of a brief shooting slump and Portland topped visiting Philadelphia.

Ben Simmons scored 19 points to lead the 76ers, who were without center Joel Embiid due to soreness in his left knee.

Lakers 121, Kings 114: Kentavious Caldwell-Pope scored a season-high 26 points, Josh Hart added 22 and host Los Angeles won for the first time since LeBron James was sidelined with a groin injury.

Brandon Ingram added 21 points, including seven during the game-deciding run. The Kings led 110-103 with 4:30 remaining when the Lakers scored 12 straight points over a three minute span.

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Toronto	27	11	.711	—
Philadelphia	23	14	.622	3½
Boston	21	14	.600	4½
Brooklyn	17	21	.447	10
New York	9	28	.243	17½

Southeast Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Charlotte	17	18	.486	—
Miami	17	18	.486	—
Orlando	16	19	.457	1
Washington	14	23	.378	4
Atlanta	11	24	.314	6

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee	25	10	.714	—
Indiana	24	12	.667	1½
Detroit	16	18	.471	8½
Chicago	10	27	.270	16
Cleveland	8	29	.216	18

Western Conference

Southwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Houston	20	15	.571	—
San Antonio	20	17	.541	1
Memphis	18	17	.514	2
Dallas	17	18	.486	3
New Orleans	16	21	.432	5

Northwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Denver	23	11	.676	—
Oklahoma City	22	13	.629	1½
Portland	21	16	.568	3½
Utah	18	19	.486	6½
Minnesota	17	19	.472	7

Pacific Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Golden State	24	13	.649	—
L.A. Clippers	21	15	.583	2½
L.A. Lakers	21	16	.568	3
Sacramento	19	17	.528	4½
Phoenix	9	28	.243	15

Saturday's games
Milwaukee 129, Brooklyn 115
Houston 108, New Orleans 104
Washington 130, Charlotte 126
Indiana 111, Cleveland 108
Boston 112, Memphis 103
Utah 129, New York 97
Denver 122, Phoenix 118
Golden State 115, Portland 105
San Antonio 122, L.A. Clippers 111

Sunday's games
Orlando 109, Detroit 107
Minnesota 113, Miami 104
Toronto 95, Chicago 89
Dallas 105, Oklahoma City 103
Portland 129, Philadelphia 95
L.A. Lakers 121, Sacramento 114

Monday's games
Atlanta at Indiana
Orlando at Charlotte
Boston at San Antonio
Memphis at Houston
Dallas at Oklahoma City
Minnesota at New Orleans
Golden State at Phoenix

Tuesday's games
Utah at Washington
Detroit at Milwaukee
New York at Sacramento
Portland at Sacramento
Philadelphia at L.A. Clippers

Wednesday's games
Atlanta at Washington
Dallas at Charlotte
Miami at Cleveland
New Orleans at Brooklyn
Detroit at Memphis
Minnesota at Boston
Orlando at Chicago
Philadelphia at Phoenix
Oklahoma City at L.A. Lakers

Sunday
Timberwolves 113, Heat 104

MINNESOTA — Covington 4-9 7-7 16, Gibson 6-10 2-3 14, Towns 12-24 7-9 34, Jones 5-12 2-2 12, Wiggins 5-16 2-2 13, Saric 4-10 3-3 13, Dieng 1-2 1-2 4, Bayless 0-4 0-0 0, Okogie 1-7 5-8 7. Totals 38-94 29-36 113.
MIAMI — McGruder 3-10 0-0 7, Jones Jr. 7-11 2-2 16, Whiteside 3-9 2-3 8, Winslow 4-15 1-2 10, Richardson 4-13 7-7 17, Olynyk 4-8 2-3 13, Adebayo 1-3 2-2 4, Wade 8-15 5-7 21, T.Johnson 3-6 1-2 8. Totals 37-90 22-28 104.

Minnesota	30	25	31	27—113
Miami	19	35	23	27—104

Three-Point Goals—Minnesota 8-24 (Towns 3-6, Saric 2-3, Dieng 1-1, Wiggins 1-3, Covington 1-5, Jones 0-1, Bayless 0-2, Okogie 0-3), Miami 8-24 (Olynyk 3-6, Richardson 2-7, T.Johnson 1-1, Winslow 1-4, McGruder 1-5, Jones Jr. 0-1). Fouled Out—None. Rebounds—Minnesota 49 (Towns 18), Miami 52 (Whiteside 13). Assists—Minnesota 24 (Towns 7), Miami 19 (Wade 5). Total Fouls—Minnesota 22, Miami 28. Technicals—Minnesota coach Timberwolves (Defensive three second), Wade, Winslow. A—19,600 (19,600).

Magic 109, Pistons 107

DETROIT — Bullock 4-14 4-4 15, Griffin 4-10 6-6 15, Drummond 7-13 0-0 14, Jackson 5-15 0-0 11, Brown 4-8 2-2 10, Johnson 2-2 6-6 10, Pachulia 2-5 4-4 8, Galloway 2-7 2-2 6, Calderon 2-3 0-0 4, Kennard 7-11 0-0 16. Totals 39-92 21-23 107.
ORLANDO — Isaac 1-4 2-2 4, Gordon 8-15 5-7 22, Vucevic 10-15 2-2 22, Augustin 6-10 4-4 17, Iwundu 0-3 2-2 2, Bamba 2-7 0-0 4, Grant 0-0 0-0 0, Simmons 3-7 1-1 9, Ross 1-5, Fournier 6-10 0-0 17, Briscoe 0-3 0-0 0. Totals 40-85 22-24 109.

Detroit	21	38	24	24—107
Orlando	31	31	23	24—109

Three-Point Goals—Detroit 8-31 (Bullock 3-8, Kennard 2-5, Griffin 1-2, Johnson 1-4, Jackson 1-6, Drummond 0-1, Brown 1-1, Calderon 0-1, Galloway 0-3), Orlando 7-24 (Augustin 4-7, Fournier 1-2, Gordon 1-4, Ross 1-5, Iwundu 0-1, Vucevic 0-2, Bamba 0-3). Fouled Out—None. Rebounds—Detroit 51 (Drummond 15), Orlando 45 (Vucevic 11). Assists—Detroit 21 (Griffin 8), Orlando 21 (Augustin 8). Total Fouls—Detroit 21, Orlando 20. A—17,761 (18,846).

Raptors 95, Bulls 89

CHICAGO — Holiday 5-11 0-0 11, Markkanen 6-14 2-2 18, Carter Jr. 6-10 4-4 16, Dunn 6-15 2-2 14, LaVine 3-17 7-7 13, Hutchison 5-5 0-0 11, Lopez 0-4 0-0 0, Arcidiacono 1-2 0-0 3, Harrison 1-2 1-3 3. Totals 33-80 16-18 89.
TORONTO — Leonard 8-22 10-11 27, Siakam 7-12 5-6 20, Ibaka 4-10 0-0 8, VanVleet 3-12 2-2 10, Green 4-8 0-0 10, Anunoby 2-6 0-0 5, Powell 2-9 0-0 4, Boucher 1-2 0-0 3, Monroe 0-3 0-0 0, Brown 0-0 0-0 0, Wright 3-8 1-1 8. Totals 34-92 18-20 95.

Chicago	20	19	26	24—89
Toronto	14	26	28	27—95

Three-Point Goals—Chicago 7-20 (Markkanen 4-7, Arcidiacono 1-2, Holiday 1-5, Carter Jr. 1-1, Dunn 0-1, LaVine 0-3), Toronto 9-33 (Green 2-5, VanVleet 2-7, Siakam 1-1, Boucher 1-2, Wright 1-2, Anunoby 1-3, Leonard 1-6, Ibaka 0-2, Powell 0-5). Fouled Out—LaVine. Rebounds—Chicago 44 (Carter Jr. 11), Toronto 52 (Siakam 12). Assists—Chicago 16 (Dunn 8), Toronto 17 (VanVleet 7). Total Fouls—Chicago 16, Toronto 15. A—19,800 (19,800).

Trail Blazers 129, 76ers 95

PHILADELPHIA — Butler 2-12 1-1 5, Chandler 2-4 1-1 5, Johnson 1-5 0-0 2, Simmons 7-12 5-10 19, Redick 3-11 3-3 11, Bolden 3-9 1-2 8, Muscala 2-6 1-2 7, Shamet 2-10 0-0 4, Jackson 3-8 4-4 10, McConnell 6-7 1-2 14, Korkmaz 3-12 2-2 10. Totals 34-96 19-27 95.
PORTLAND — Turner 4-6 0-0 8, Aminu 5-6 5-5 16, Nurkic 7-11 0-1 14, Lillard 6-10 0-0 15, McCollum 13-18 5-5 35, Layman 1-3 0-0 3, Leonard 3-4 3-4 9, Collins 3-4 1-4 7, Swanigan 1-2 2-2 4, Curry 3-7 0-0 6, Harkless 0-1 0-0 0, Baldwin IV 1-4 3-4 5, Stauskas 2-5 0-0 6. Totals 49-83 19-25 129.

Philadelphia	20	21	26	28—95
Portland	31	39	36	23—129

Three-Point Goals—Philadelphia 8-43 (Muscala 2-6, Redick 2-7, Korkmaz 2-9, McConnell 1-1, Bolden 1-6, Chandler 0-2, Johnson 0-2, Butler 0-2, Jackson 0-3, Shamet 0-5), Portland 12-32 (McCollum 4-7, Lillard 3-6, Stauskas 2-2, Layman 1-2, Curry 1-2, Aminu 1-2, Simons 0-1). Fouled Out—None. Rebounds—Philadelphia 36 (Bolden 8), Portland 59 (Aminu, Leonard 8). Assists—Philadelphia 18 (Butler 6), Portland 28 (Lillard 5). Total Fouls—Philadelphia 21, Portland 22. Technicals—Nurkic. A—19,393 (19,393).

Mavericks 105, Thunder 103

OKLAHOMA CITY — George 12-24 9-12 36, Grant 4-8 2-2 10, Adams 4-5 0-2 8, Westbrook 4-22 1-2 9, Nader 1-5 0-0 3, Patterson 4-5 0-0 10, Noel 1-1 0-0 2, Felton 1-2 0-0 3, Schroder 8-19 1-2 19, Diallo 1-2 1-1 3. Totals 40-93 14-21 103.
DALLAS — Barnes 6-13 3-3 16, Kleber 1-5 0-0 3, Jordan 4-6 4-6 12, Smith Jr. 5-10 2-2 14, Doncic 9-19 3-4 25, Finney-Smith 3-5 3-3 10, Nowitzki 2-4 0-0 6, Powell 2-7 2-4 6, Barea 2-8 0-0 6, Harris 3-4 0-0 7. Totals 37-81 17-22 105.

Oklahoma City	28	31	14	30—103
Dallas	27	30	27	21—105

Three-Point Goals—Oklahoma City 9-38 (George 3-11, Patterson 2-3, Schroder 2-7, Felton 1-2, Nader 1-4, Grant 0-1, Diallo 0-1, Adams 0-1, Westbrook 0-8), Dallas 14-39 (Doncic 4-11, Nowitzki 2-3, Barea 2-5, Smith Jr. 2-5, Harris 1-2, Finney-Smith 1-3, Barnes 1-5, Kleber 1-3). Fouled Out—None. Rebounds—Oklahoma City 39 (Adams, Westbrook 9), Dallas 49 (Jordan 17). Assists—Oklahoma City 17 (Westbrook 8), Dallas 21 (Barea 10). Total Fouls—Oklahoma City 23, Dallas 16. Technicals—Westbrook, Smith Jr.. A—20,380 (19,200).

Lakers 121, Kings 114

SACRAMENTO — Shumpert 3-12 1-2 8, Bjelica 2-5 0-0 5, Cauley-Stein 5-10 1-1 11, Fox 12-19 1-2 26, Hield 7-17 3-4 21, Jackson 1-4 2-2 5, Koufos 2-3 0-0 4, Ferrell 3-5 1-1 8, Bogdanovic 5-8 0-0 13, McLemore 2-2 0-0 5. Totals 46-95 9-12 114.
L.A. LAKERS — Ingram 5-11 2-2 12, Kuzma 5-17 4-4 18, McGee 4-8 0-0 8, Ball 6-14 0-4 13, Hart 8-14 3-3 22, Mykhailiuk 0-1 0-0 0, J.Williams 0-1 0-0 0, Chandler 3-5 0-0 6, Caldwell-Pope 9-21 3-3 26, Stephenson 3-4 0-0 7. Totals 47-98 12-20 121.

Sacramento	31	37	28	18—114
L.A. Lakers	37	27	28	29—121

Three-Point Goals—Sacramento 13-34 (Hield 4-11, Bogdanovic 3-6, Mclemore 1-1, Ferrell 1-1, Bjelica 1-2, Fox 1-3, Jackson 1-2, Shumpert 1-7), L.A. Lakers 15-44 (Caldwell-Pope 5-13, Kuzma 4-10, Hart 3-8, Stephenson 1-2, Ingram 1-3, Ball 1-6, Mykhailiuk 0-1, Chandler 0-1). Fouled Out—None. Rebounds—Sacramento 45 (Cauley-Stein 12), L.A. Lakers 50 (McGee 11). Assists—Sacramento 23 (Fox 7), L.A. Lakers 30 (Ingram 9). Total Fouls—Sacramento 23, L.A. Lakers 17. Technicals—L.A. Lakers coach Lakers (Defensive three second) 3. A—18,997 (18,997).

Calendar

Feb. 7 — Trade deadline, 3 p.m. EST.
Feb. 16 — Three-point, slam dunk contests, Charlotte, N.C.
Feb. 17 — NBA All-Star Game, Charlotte, N.C.
April 10 — Regular season ends.
April 13 — Playoffs begin.

COLLEGE BASKETBALL/COLLEGE FOOTBALL/NHL

Slumping UCLA fires Alford

BY BETH HARRIS
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Steve Alford has been fired as UCLA basketball coach after six seasons, with the Bruins mired in a four-game skid that included losses at home to Belmont and Liberty.

Athletic director Dan Guerrero said Monday that assistant Murry Bartow will serve as interim coach through the end of the season.

UCLA is 7-6 and in danger of missing the NCAA Tournament despite a talented roster that includes sophomore Kris Wilkes and freshman Moses Brown.

Alford's final game was a 73-58 loss to Liberty on Saturday, the worst home defeat in his tenure. The Bruins committed 24 turnovers and missed a season-high 22 three-pointers. Alford called it the most disappointing loss in his 28-year coaching career.

It's unusual for UCLA to fire a coach in the middle of the season, but with the Bruins set to open Pac-12 play Thursday against Stanford at home, Guerrero is clearly hoping it spurs a turnaround.

"While Steve led us to three Sweet 16 appearances, we simply have not been performing at a consistent level and our struggles up to this point in the season do not bode well for the future," Guerrero said in a statement.

Guerrero said the terms of Alford's contract will be honored by UCLA Athletics, exclusively using department-generated funds.

He said a national search for a new head coach will begin immediately, with former Bruins player and current Golden State Warriors general manager Bob Myers assisting.

Alford's troubles had been mounting since the season began.

On Dec. 15, the Bruins lost to mid-major Belmont at Pauley Pavilion.

Four days after that, UCLA lost by 29 points at Cincinnati. The current skid, in which the Bruins have lost by an average of 15 points, is the longest since the end of the 2015-16 season and the first time the Bruins have dropped four straight nonconference games since 2010-11.

Alford had a 124-63 record in Westwood after taking over the program in March 2013. The 54-year-old coach won one Pac-12 tournament title but never a regular-season league title, and made four NCAA Tournament appearances, including Sweet 16 berths in his first two years.

But the drop-off was swift for a school that owns a record 11 national championships. The Bruins lost to St. Bonaventure in the First Four last season, the first time in school history that UCLA was relegated to a play-in game.

They failed to make the NCAA Tournament in 2015-16, when the team went 15-17 for the program's fourth losing record since 1948 when John Wooden became coach.

Rose Bowl QBs in spotlight

BY JOE REEDY
Associated Press

PASADENA, Calif. — The Rose Bowl will be final collegiate start for Washington's Jake Browning. Whether or not it will be for Ohio State's Dwayne Haskins remains a mystery.

Haskins' future has been as much a topic of conversation as Urban Meyer's final game as the Buckeyes' coach. The redshirt sophomore finished third in Heisman Trophy voting after leading the nation with 4,580 passing yards and 47 touchdowns while directing the Buckeyes (12-1) to a Big Ten title.

After Justin Herbert announced he would return to Oregon for his senior season, Haskins has emerged as the top quarterback prospect should he decide to declare for April's NFL Draft. He has said throughout the week though that he is taking his time since the deadline isn't until Jan. 15.

"I'm happy he made that decision, but it has nothing to do with me," Haskins said about Herbert. "I'm just excited to be in position to make a decision, so I'm just taking it all in."

While many are projecting Haskins as a possible first-round pick, Browning's name doesn't generate as much fervor. The senior has directed the Huskies to a Pac-12 Conference-record 39 wins, but he hasn't duplicated a successful sophomore season, when he threw for 43 touchdowns, finished sixth in Heisman balloting and led Washington to the College Football Playoff semifinals.

Browning has thrown 35 touchdowns the past two seasons as the Pac-12 champion Huskies (10-3) showed more balance on offense but there were also times when he struggled with decision-making and turnovers.

"I don't think I've been someone that was super high ranked on anything, even coming into college," Browning said. "I'm kind of used to that. I've been an underdog for a long time, and it has worked out for me."

While Haskins has thrown for at least 230 yards in all 13 games this season, Browning — who threw for 2,879 yards and 16 touchdowns — has done that only five times. Haskins had four games where he threw five or more touchdowns while the most Browning had this season was three, which he did in two games.

What both players do have is the confidence of their head coach. Meyer said he would put Haskins' leadership up there with two of his former quarterbacks J.T. Barrett and Tim Tebow.

Washington's Chris Peterson said Browning's wins speak loudest.

"He hasn't flinched. He's won a bunch of games. His teammates really love him. We love him. And I don't know what there is else to say about him," Peterson said.

Bowl games on AFN

Citrus Bowl
Kentucky vs. Penn State
AFN-Atlantic
7 p.m. Tuesday CET
3 a.m. Wednesday JKT

Fiesta Bowl
LSU vs. UCF
AFN-Sports
7 p.m. Tuesday CET
3 a.m. Wednesday JKT

Rose Bowl
Washington vs. Ohio State
AFN-Sports
11 p.m. Tuesday CET
7 a.m. Wednesday JKT

Sugar Bowl
Texas vs. Georgia
AFN-Sports
2:45 a.m. Wednesday CET
10:45 a.m. Wednesday JKT

NHL scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Tampa Bay	39	30	7	2	62	166	116
Toronto	39	26	11	2	54	144	109
Buffalo	39	21	12	6	48	114	112
Boston	39	21	14	4	46	110	103
Montreal	39	20	14	5	45	125	126
Florida	37	16	15	6	38	120	131
Detroit	40	15	19	6	36	112	136
Ottawa	39	15	20	4	34	123	153

Metropolitan Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Washington	39	24	10	3	51	135	106
Columbus	38	22	13	3	47	123	116
Pittsburgh	38	20	12	6	46	130	113
N.Y. Islanders	37	20	13	4	44	111	101
N.Y. Rangers	37	16	14	7	39	109	122
Philadelphia	37	15	17	5	35	110	133
Carolina	37	15	17	5	35	91	108
New Jersey	37	14	16	7	35	109	127

Western Conference

Central Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Winnipeg	39	25	12	2	52	130	108
Nashville	39	22	15	2	46	114	101
Colorado	39	19	13	7	45	132	120
Dallas	39	20	16	3	43	98	103
Minnesota	37	18	16	3	39	108	105
Chicago	41	15	20	6	36	119	149
St. Louis	38	15	17	4	34	101	121

Pacific Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Calgary	40	24	12	4	50	133	107
Vegas	42	23	15	4	50	128	115
San Jose	40	21	12	7	49	135	122
Anaheim	40	19	15	6	44	101	118
Vancouver	41	19	18	4	42	124	129
Edmonton	38	18	17	3	39	108	122
Arizona	39	17	20	2	36	100	112
Los Angeles	39	15	21	3	33	89	117

Note: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss. Top three teams in each division and two wild cards per conference advance to playoffs.

Sunday's games
Vegas 5, Arizona 1

Monday's games
Nashville at Washington
Vancouver at New Jersey
Philadelphia at Carolina
Pittsburgh at Minnesota
N.Y. Islanders at Buffalo
N.Y. Rangers at St. Louis
Ottawa at Columbus
Florida at Detroit
Tampa Bay at Anaheim
Los Angeles at Colorado
Montreal at Dallas
San Jose at Calgary
Winnipeg at Edmonton

Tuesday's games
Boston vs. Chicago at South Bend, Ind.
Philadelphia at Nashville
Los Angeles at Vegas

Wednesday's games
Pittsburgh at N.Y. Rangers
Calgary at Detroit
Vancouver at Ottawa
New Jersey at Dallas
Edmonton at Arizona
San Jose at Colorado

Thursday's games
Minnesota at Toronto
Carolina at Philadelphia
Florida at Buffalo
Calgary at Boston
Chicago vs. N.Y. Islanders at Nassau
Veterans Memorial Coliseum
Vancouver at Montreal
Washington at St. Louis
Tampa Bay at Los Angeles

Sunday
Golden Knights 5, Arizona 1

Vegas	1	1	3—5
Arizona	0	1	0—1

First Period—1, Vegas, Stastny 5 (Tuch, Pirri), 3:35.

Second Period—2, Vegas, Smith 9 (Hunt, Marchessault), 16:03. 3, Arizona, Galchenyuk 6 (Keller, Ekman-Larsson), 16:57 (pp).

Third Period—4, Vegas, Eakin 12, 4:21. 5, Vegas, Pirri 5 (McNabb, Stastny), 6:58. 6, Vegas, Carpenter 2 (Holden), 11:44 (sh).

Shots on Goal—Vegas 15-8-14—37. Arizona 9-8-13—30.

Power-play opportunities—Vegas 0 of 3; Arizona 1 of 6.

Goalies—Vegas, Fleury 22-10-4 (30 shots-29 saves). Arizona, Kuemper 5-11-2 (37-32).

A—17,125 (17,125). **T**—2:30.

Leaders
Scoring
Through Sunday, December 30, 2018

	GP	G	A	PTS
Nikita Kucherov, TB	39	18	45	63
Mikko Rantanen, COL	39	17	44	61
Nathan MacKinnon, COL	39	23	35	58
Connor McDavid, EDM	37	21	35	56
Mitchell Marner, TOR	39	16	37	53
Johnny Gaudreau, CGY	39	19	32	51
Patrick Kane, CHI	40	22	28	50
Brayden Point, TB	39	22	28	50
Mark Scheifele, WPG	38	22	27	49
Jack Eichel, BUF	39	15	34	49
Blake Wheeler, WPG	38	5	44	49
David Pastrnak, BOS	39	23	25	48
Leon Draisaitl, EDM	38	19	28	47
Sidney Crosby, PIT	35	17	29	46
Alex Ovechkin, WAS	37	29	16	45
5 tied with 44 pts.				

NHL roundup

Pirri helps Vegas top Arizona

Associated Press

GLENDALE, Ariz. — Brandon Pirri has had a late December to remember for the Vegas Golden Knights.

The journeyman forward had a goal and assist in the Golden Knights' 5-1 win over the Arizona Coyotes on Sunday night, and has five goals as part of his seven points in the six games he's played for Vegas this season.

Pirri failed to register a point in only one of those games. He's been a regular since Dec. 20.

"It's a lot of fun playing here because everyone's contributing," Pirri said. "Things are going good. I've always believed in myself and I'm getting the opportunity. When you get the opportunity you have to reward the people that put you in this spot and at the same time I have to reward myself. I put in a lot of work."

Paul Stastny also had a goal and an assist and Marc-Andre Fleury stopped 29 shots for Vegas. Reilly Smith, Cody Eakin and Ryan Carpenter also scored to help Vegas win its third straight and extend its points streak to six games.

The Golden Knights have won five of six games against Arizona since Vegas entered the NHL last season.

"We played hard, we played quick. We were good with the forecheck, we were good with the puck and we didn't make a lot of mistakes," forward Jonathan Marchessault said.

A large following of Golden Knights fans made plenty of noise for the visiting team in the most recent installment of the fledgling rivalry, and saw their team take control with three goals in the third period.

The third was a short-handed goal from Carpenter, his second goal of the season.

Just when the Golden Knights' first power play ended, Pirri got a rebound behind the net and backhanded the puck back toward the crease, where Stastny was waiting to stuff it in at 3:35 of the first.

Ross D. Franklin/AP

Golden Knights goaltender Marc-Andre Fleury, right, celebrates a win against the Coyotes with right wing Ryan Reaves on Sunday.

NFL

Briefly

Lewis out as Bengals coach after 16 seasons

Associated Press

CINCINNATI — The Bengals fired coach Marvin Lewis on Monday, ending a 16-year stay in Cincinnati that included seven playoff appearances without so much as one win.

The move ends the second-longest head coaching tenure in the league. New England's Bill Belichick is wrapping up his 19th season with another postseason berth. He's won five Super Bowls and made eight appearances in the title game, both NFL records.

Lewis leaves Cincinnati with a postseason record of 0-7, the worst in NFL history. The Bengals haven't won a playoff game since the 1990 season, tied with Washington for the fifth-longest stretch of futility in league history.

A third straight losing season punctuated by plummeting attendance prompted change-resistant Mike Brown to finally cut ties with Lewis, whose loyalty and close working relationship with the owner brought him repeated contract extensions even as the playoff losses piled up.

They described their parting Monday as a mutual decision.

The Bengals (6-10) lost in Pittsburgh 16-13 on Sunday and finished last in the AFC North for only the second time under Lewis. Attendance at Paul Brown Stadium has fallen to the second lowest in the league, ahead of only the Los Angeles Chargers, who are playing in a small, temporary stadium.

"I didn't deliver what the No. 1 goal is, and that's to be world champions, and we did not get that done," Lewis said at a news conference. "A lot of positives, but that's the one goal as a coach you look forward to doing. Mike and I both decided it's time. I think it's a tough moment for both of us, but we both realized."

FRANK VICTORES/AP

The Bengals fired coach Marvin Lewis, pictured, on Monday, ending a 16-year stay in Cincinnati that included seven playoff appearances, but zero victories.

In other NFL news:

■ Miami Dolphins coach Adam Gase has been fired and executive vice president of football operations Mike Tannenbaum has been demoted after the team missed the playoffs for the 15th time in 17 years.

Ross made the moves Monday following a 7-9 season. Gase went 23-26 with the Dolphins, and a 42-17 loss Sunday at Buffalo sealed his fate. Tannenbaum, who held his job for four years and was involved with several disappointing drafts, was reassigned within the organization.

■ The Arizona Cardinals have fired Steve Wilks after just one season as head coach.

Wilks' firing Monday followed a 3-13 season, the franchise's worst record in 18 years and the worst in the NFL this season.

Wilks, 49, was defensive backs coach at Carolina for five seasons before being promoted to defensive coordinator by Panthers coach Ron Rivera for the 2017 season.

■ Vance Joseph was fired as coach of the Denver Broncos on Monday after back-to-back double-digit losing seasons.

Joseph met with general manager John Elway after completing a 6-10 season and was dismissed with two years and about $6 million left on his contract.

■ Todd Bowles' tenure with the New York Jets began four years ago with plenty of promise. It ended with too many losses and no playoff appearances.

The team announced the long-expected decision that it moved on from Bowles on Sunday night, a few hours after the Jets wrapped up their season with a 38-3 loss at New England.

■ Coach Jon Gruden found another former television analyst to help him on his rebuild of the Oakland Raiders.

The Raiders hired former NFL Network draft guru Mike Mayock as their new general manager on Monday, a person familiar with the move confirmed. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because the hiring hadn't been announced.

Wire: Not everyone can get in

Saturday afternoon.

The Saints (13-3) have the top seed in the NFC, and the Rams (12-4) got the No. 2 spot when they beat San Francisco. Chicago (12-4), whose win at Minnesota knocked out the Vikings and put the Eagles into the postseason, is seeded third and gets Philadelphia (9-7) next Sunday.

Fourth seed Dallas (10-6) will play Seattle (10-6) on Saturday.

C.J. Mosley intercepted a fourth-down pass by Baker Mayfield to preserve the Ravens' 26-24 win as Baltimore rushed for a season-best 296 yards. A year ago, Baltimore missed the playoffs by losing its finale at home to the Bengals, who rallied with a last-minute touchdown.

"If you want to write a book about this season, probably no one would believe it," coach John Harbaugh said.

Steelers players remained on the field after they edged Cincinnati 16-13 and watched the drama from Baltimore on the videoboard. But their archrival Browns couldn't help them against the equally hated Ravens, and Pittsburgh (9-6-1) is out.

"It just sucks," Steelers guard David DeCastro said. "How hard we work, how much effort we put in. To go from 7-2-1 to where we are now is heartbreaking."

Nick Foles, who led the Eagles to the Super Bowl title over the Patriots in Minneapolis last February, guided them to a resounding 24-0 victory at Washington. Then the Bears helped out at Minnesota with a 24-10 win even though they had nothing to play for, being set as the NFC's third seed.

"We're not sneaking in. We're here to do some damage," Eagles safety Malcolm Jenkins said.

Earlier, the Texans rallied from losing their first three games to win the AFC South and become the No 3 seed.

Houston easily handled Jacksonville 20-3 Sunday as Deshaun Watson threw for 234 yards and ran for a touchdown, and DeAndre Hopkins had 147 yards receiving.

The Texans finished last in the division in 2017. They and the Bears have done the worst-to-first turnaround this season, making it 15 of the past 16 seasons that has occurred in the league.

"It's do or die now, so you've got to put everything on the line now," Watson said. "Prepare harder than you did before and anything can happen at this point. The tournament is wide open and it's my first playoff, so I'm just excited to get in and see how things go."

New England, meanwhile, will get a week off in early January for the 13th time since 2001, most in the NFL during that span. The Patriots routed the Jets 38-3, and because they defeated Houston during the season, they get the bye.

AFC

FIRST-ROUND BYES

Kansas City (12-4)

New England (11-5)

WILD-CARD GAMES

Indianapolis (10-6) at Houston (11-5)
AFN-Sports
10 p.m. Saturday CET
6 a.m. Sunday JKT

Los Angeles (12-4) at Baltimore (10-6)
AFN-Sports
7 p.m. Sunday CET
3 a.m. Monday JKT

NFC

FIRST-ROUND BYES

New Orleans (13-3)

Los Angeles (13-3)

WILD-CARD GAMES

Philadelphia (9-7) at Chicago (12-4)
AFN-Sports
10:30 p.m. Sunday CET
6:30 a.m. Monday JKT

Seattle (10-6) at Dallas (10-6)
AFN-Sports
2 a.m. Sunday CET
10 a.m. Sunday JKT

NFL

Texans top Jaguars to wrap up AFC South

HOUSTON — After the Houston Texans fell to 0-3 with a loss at home to the New York Giants on Sept. 23, they appeared to be headed for a second straight losing season.

Instead, the Texans (11-5) won their next nine games and 11 of their last 13, capped by Sunday's win over the Jacksonville Jaguars, to clinch the AFC South.

"We have a lot bigger goals," J.J. Watt said. "I have a lot bigger goals but it's good. Especially after starting 0-3 and everybody writes you off. Guys in the locker room believed. Guys in the locker room never gave up."

Deshaun Watson threw for 234 yards and ran for a touchdown and DeAndre Hopkins had 147 yards receiving in the victory.

The Texans will make their fifth playoff appearance after winning the division for the fifth time in franchise history. Houston returns to the postseason for the third time in four years after bouncing back a 4-12 campaign in which Watson and Watt suffered season-ending injuries.

"The way we started out, it's a testament to the players in that locker room," coach Bill O'Brien said. "They've always hung tough. And to go from 0-3 (and then) go 11-2 in this league is pretty tough to do. Give credit to the players."

Texans 20, Jaguars 3

	Jac	Hou
Jacksonville	0　0　0—3	
Houston	3　14　0—20	

First Quarter
Jac—FG Forbath 25, 10:08.
Hou—FG Fairbairn 23, 5:20.

Second Quarter
Hou—Watson 1 run (Fairbairn kick), 14:56.
Hou—Miller 7 run (Fairbairn kick), 3:01.

Third Quarter
Hou—FG Fairbairn 24, 10:52.
A—71,848.

	Jac	Hou
First downs	6	23
Total Net Yards	119	342
Rushes-yards	16-30	33-134
Passing	89	208
Punt Returns	3-17	6-56
Kickoff Returns	1-40	0-0
Interceptions Ret.	0-0	1-4
Comp-Att-Int	15-28-1	25-35-0
Sacked-Yards Lost	3-18	5-26
Punts	9-49.9	7-42.1
Fumbles-Lost	2-1	1-1
Penalties-Yards	8-68	2-15
Time of Possession	24:53	35:07

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS
RUSHING—Jacksonville, Bortles 4-15, Hyde 10-13, Williams 2-2. Houston, Watson 13-66, Miller 17-56, Blue 3-12.
PASSING—Jacksonville, Bortles 15-28-1-107. Houston, Watson 25-35-0-234.
RECEIVING—Jacksonville, K.Cole 4-45, O'Shaughnessy 3-25, Westbrook 3-10, Moncrief 2-21, Hyde 2-6, Bell 1-0. Houston, Hopkins 12-147, Carter 4-33, W.Smith 3-28, Blue 2-12, Miller 2-0, Griffin 1-8, J.Thomas 1-6.

Texans receiver DeAndre Hopkins pulls in a pass in front of Jaguars cornerback Jalen Ramsey during the second half Sunday in Houston.
DAVID J. PHILLIP/AP

QB Ryan gets TD catch in Falcons' victory

TAMPA, Fla. — Matt Ryan's first career reception went for a touchdown and the Atlanta quarterback also threw for 378 yards and two TDs to help the Falcons conclude a disappointing season with a victory over the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

Matt Bryant's second field goal, a 37-yarder as time expired, provided the winning points after Jameis Winston rallied the Bucs (5-11) from a 31-20 deficit to a one-point lead with just over five minutes to go.

The Falcons (7-9) escaped a 17-0 hole with Ryan leading scoring drives on five consecutive possessions from late in the second quarter until early in the fourth. He began the comeback with a 19-yard scoring throw to Julio Jones and also tossed a 7-yarder to Calvin Ridley.

In between, Ryan caught a 5-yard TD pass from receiver Mohamed Sanu, Bryant kicked a 49-yard field goal and Tevin Coleman scored on a 23-yard run.

Falcons 34, Buccaneers 32

Atlanta	0　7　17　10—34			
Tampa Bay	7　10　3　12—32			

First Quarter
TB—Evans 9 pass from Winston (Santos kick), 3:48.

Second Quarter
TB—FG Santos 36, 8:25.
TB—Godwin 30 pass from Winston (Santos kick), :46.
Atl—J.Jones 19 pass from Ryan (Bryant kick), :20.

Third Quarter
Atl—Ryan 5 pass from Sanu (Bryant kick), 8:49.
TB—FG Santos 45, 6:39.
Atl—FG Bryant 49, 1:59.
Atl—Coleman 23 run (Bryant kick), :44.

Fourth Quarter
Atl—Ridley 7 pass from Ryan (Bryant kick), 10:51.
TB—Godwin 19 pass from Winston (pass failed), 5:10.
Atl—FG Bryant 37, :00.
A—52,884.

	Atl	TB
First downs	29	22
Total Net Yards	498	433
Rushes-yards	30-109	20-92
Passing	380	341
Punt Returns	2-28	2-9
Kickoff Returns	4-80	3-91
Interceptions Ret.	1-2	1-13
Comp-Att-Int	32-45-1	22-35-1
Sacked-Yards Lost	1-3	1-4
Punts	5-48.0	4-50.5
Fumbles-Lost	0-0	1-0
Penalties-Yards	8-55	3-30
Time of Possession	34:46	25:14

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS
RUSHING—Atlanta, Coleman 8-45, Hill 8-30, Langford 9-25, Ryan 4-7, Sanu 1-2. Tampa Bay, Barber 15-66, Winston 2-23, Rodgers 3-3.
PASSING—Atlanta, Ryan 31-44-1-378, Sanu 1-1-0-5. Tampa Bay, Winston 22-35-1-345.
RECEIVING—Atlanta, J.Jones 9-138, Sanu 7-90, Hooper 5-67, Ridley 5-32, Gage 2-14, Paulsen 1-19, Coleman 1-9, Hill 1-9, Ryan 1-5. Tampa Bay, Godwin 6-114, Evans 6-106, Humphries 5-66, Brate 2-39, Wilson 1-16, Barber 1-2, Rodgers 1-2.

Rams finish sweep of West foes to earn bye

LOS ANGELES — Even after everything the Los Angeles Rams have accomplished this season, they still knew they probably needed to beat rival San Francisco in the finale for a first-round playoff bye.

While their high-powered offense did its part as usual, a four-takeaway effort by the defense was even more exciting as the Rams secured a well-deserved week off.

Brandin Cooks and Josh Reynolds caught two touchdown passes apiece from Jared Goff, and the Rams wrapped up a six-game sweep of their NFC West opponents.

Cory Littleton returned one of his two interceptions for a TD as the Rams (13-3) completed their winningest regular season since 2001 by making sure they get a few days off before they attempt to earn their first playoff victory since the 2004 season.

The Rams needed the win over the Niners or a loss by Chicago to clinch the No. 2 seed in the NFC postseason. Los Angeles didn't count on the Bears, who ended up beating Minnesota. The Rams played nearly every starter except Todd Gurley and jumping to a 14-0 lead in the first five minutes before stretching it to 28-3 midway through the second quarter.

The Rams hadn't swept San Francisco since 2004.

"We're going into [the bye week] with a lot of confidence after this," Reynolds said. "The rest is going to help us out, and we'll be at our best when the playoffs start."

Rams 48, 49ers 32

San Francisco	3　7　7　15—32			
L.A. Rams	14　17　14　3—48			

First Quarter
La—Cooks 3 pass from Goff (Zuerlein kick), 11:57.
La—Anderson 1 run (Zuerlein kick), 10:42.
SF—FG Gould 30, 2:11.

Second Quarter
La—Littleton 19 interception return (Zuerlein kick), 12:37.
La—Cooks 18 pass from Goff (Zuerlein kick), 6:00.
SF—James 9 pass from Mullens (Gould kick), 2:07.
La—FG Zuerlein 28, :00.

Third Quarter
La—Reynolds 29 pass from Goff (Zuerlein kick), 12:19.
SF—Morris 1 run (Gould kick), 8:23.
La—Reynolds 2 pass from Goff (Zuerlein kick), 2:58.

Fourth Quarter
La—FG Zuerlein 51, 11:44.
SF—Bourne 2 pass from Mullens (Gould kick), 6:54.
SF—Kittle 43 pass from Mullens (T.Taylor pass from Mullens), 2:20.
A—72,161.

	SF	La
First downs	22	28
Total Net Yards	391	377
Rushes-yards	22-127	42-155
Passing	264	222
Punt Returns	0-0	2-11
Kickoff Returns	1-25	0-0
Interceptions Ret.	1-0	4-0
Comp-Att-Int	23-33-3	17-29-0
Sacked-Yards Lost	3-18	0-0
Punts	2-49.5	3-43.3
Fumbles-Lost	1-1	2-0
Penalties-Yards	5-41	6-57
Time of Possession	28:10	31:50

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS
RUSHING—San Francisco, Morris 16-111, Juszczyk 2-9, Mullens 1-(minus 2). Los Angeles, Anderson 23-132, Kelly 15-30, Woods 1-1, Goff 1-0, Mannion 2-(minus 8).
PASSING—San Francisco, Mullens 23-33-3-282. Los Angeles, Goff 15-26-0-199, Mannion 2-3-0-23.
RECEIVING—San Francisco, Kittle 9-149, Bourne 5-59, James 3-32, T.Taylor 3-17, Juszczyk 1-15, Dwelley 1-6, Morris 1-4. Los Angeles, Cooks 5-62, Reynolds 4-55, Anderson 3-22, Woods 2-24, Higbee 1-30, Kelly 1-18, Mundt 1-5.

Rams defensive end Aaron Donald, right, puts pressure on 49ers quarterback Nick Mullens on Sunday in Los Angeles.
MARK J. TERRILL/AP

Prescott, Cowboys rally past Giants

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. — Dak Prescott threw a 32-yard fourth-down touchdown pass to Cole Beasley on a play that was reversed by video replay and added a winning 2-point conversion pass to Michael Gallup with 1:12 to play for the playoff-bound Dallas Cowboys.

In what might have been quarterback Eli Manning's final start for the Giants, Prescott passed for 387 yards and the season-high four touchdowns, the first three to tight end Blake Jarwin. The Cowboys (10-6) won for the seventh time in eight games.

The game was meaningless for the NFC East champion Cowboys. Coach Jason Garrett rested NFL leading rusher Ezekiel Elliott and two of his top offensive linemen, but kept Prescott (27-for-44) on the field the whole game.

It worked, although the Giants (5-11) did their best despite losing their third straight game.

Saquon Barkley capped a record-setting rookie season with a sensational 2-yard touchdown dive with 3:21 to play.

Cowboys 36, Giants 34

Dallas	0　14　7　15—36			
New York	0　7　11　17—35			

Second Quarter
Dal—Jarwin 13 pass from Prescott (Maher kick), 8:11.
Dal—Jarwin 19 pass from Prescott (Maher kick), 1:50.
NYG—Latimer 21 pass from Manning (Rosas kick), :15.

Third Quarter
NYG—FG Rosas 48, 9:00.
Dal—Jarwin 5 pass from Prescott (Maher kick), 5:00.
NYG—Engram 6 pass from Manning (Engram pass from Manning), 1:53.

Fourth Quarter
NYG—Gallman 2 run (Rosas kick), 10:38.
Dal—R.Smith 1 run (Maher kick), 9:11.
NYG—Barkley 2 run (Rosas kick), 3:21.
NYG—FG Rosas 38, 2:35.
Dal—Beasley 32 pass from Prescott (Gallup pass from Prescott), 1:12.
A—77,750.

	Dal	NYG
First downs	23	20
Total Net Yards	419	441
Rushes-yards	22-51	25-143
Passing	368	298
Punt Returns	0-0	0-0
Kickoff Returns	3-70	5-142
Interceptions Ret.	0-0	0-0
Comp-Att-Int	27-44-0	24-41-1
Sacked-Yards Lost	4-19	1-3
Punts	3-38.7	2-47.0
Fumbles-Lost	1-1	1-1
Penalties-Yards	6-46	11-78
Time of Possession	30:52	29:08

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS
RUSHING—Dallas, R.Smith 12-35, Jackley 17-109, Gallman 6-23, S.Shepard 1-1. New York, Manning 1-2.
PASSING—Dallas, Prescott 27-44-0-387. New York, Manning 24-41-1-301.
RECEIVING—Dallas, Jarwin 7-119, Beasley 6-94, Cooper 5-31, Gallup 3-50, R.Smith 2-14, Hurns 1-49, Schultz 1-17, Austin 1-10, N.Brown 1-3. New York, Engram 5-81, Latimer 4-72, S.Shepard 4-67, Barkley 4-33, Fowler 3-21, Simonson 2-14, Gallman 1-7, Penny 1-6.
MISSED FIELD GOALS—Dallas, Maher 34.

Janikowski's FG carries Seattle over Arizona

SEATTLE — Sebastian Janikowski made a 33-yard field goal on the final play and the Seattle Seahawks beat the Arizona Cardinals, wrapping up the No. 5 seed in the NFC playoffs and a matchup at Dallas.

Seattle took a 24-21 lead earlier in the fourth quarter on Janikowski's 42-yard field goal, and watched Arizona answer with Zane Gonzalez's third field goal of the game, from 55 yards with 1:49 left to tie it. Gonzalez hit earlier from 36 and 50 yards.

After converting a third-and-1 early in the drive, Russell Wilson hit Tyler Lockett for 37 yards to the Arizona 25-yard line. After a couple of running plays, Janikowski hit the winner to give Seattle 10 wins for the sixth time in Pete Carroll's tenure.

Chris Carson rushed for a career-high 122 yards and a touchdown, but Seattle slogged through a mostly forgettable Week 17 performance. Russell Wilson got sacked six times and a litany of special teams mistakes allowed the hapless Cardinals to stick around.

Seahawks 27, Cardinals 24

Arizona	3　10　8　3—24			
Seattle	7　7　7　6—27			

First Quarter
Ari—FG Gonzalez 36, 7:22.
Sea—Lockett 29 pass from Wilson (Janikowski kick), 1:25.

Second Quarter
Sea—Carson 7 run (Janikowski kick), 11:39.
Ari—Fitzgerald 15 pass from Rosen (Gonzalez kick), 5:44.
Ari—FG Gonzalez 50, 1:12.

Third Quarter
Sea—Davis 17 run (Janikowski kick), 4:34.
Ari—Gardeck 0 blocked punt return (Johnson run), :11.

Fourth Quarter
Sea—FG Janikowski 42, 6:20.
Ari—FG Gonzalez 55, 1:49.
Sea—FG Janikowski 33, :00.
A—68,990.

	Ari	Sea
First downs	12	16
Total Net Yards	198	291
Rushes-yards	24-85	34-182
Passing	113	109
Kickoff Returns	5-66	0-0
Interceptions Ret.	1-25	0-0
Comp-Att-Int	18-34-0	12-21-1
Sacked-Yards Lost	6-36	6-43
Punts	5-49.4	8-41.3
Fumbles-Lost	0-0	1-1
Penalties-Yards	3-20	1-10
Time of Possession	30:51	29:09

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS
RUSHING—Arizona, Johnson 17-62, Edmonds 6-14, C.Williams 1-9. Seattle, Carson 19-122, Davis 7-44, E.Dickson 1-9, Penny 4-6, Lockett 1-3, Wilson 2-(minus 2).
PASSING—Arizona, Rosen 18-34-0-149. Seattle, Wilson 12-21-1-152.
RECEIVING—Arizona, C.Williams 5-51, Fitzgerald 4-36, Johnson 3-6, Phillips 2-13, Edmonds 2-23, Edmonds 2-4. Seattle, Lockett 2-66, Baldwin 2-27, Vannett 2-17, D.Moore 2-16, Davis 2-12, J.Brown 1-7, Carson 1-7.

— Associated Press

NFL

American Conference

East

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
y-New England	11	5	0	.688	436	325
Miami	7	9	0	.438	319	433
Buffalo	6	10	0	.375	269	374
N.Y. Jets	4	12	0	.250	333	441

South

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
y-Houston	11	5	0	.688	402	316
x-Indianapolis	10	6	0	.625	433	344
Tennessee	9	7	0	.563	310	303
Jacksonville	5	11	0	.313	245	316

North

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
y-Baltimore	10	6	0	.625	389	287
Pittsburgh	9	6	1	.594	428	360
Cleveland	7	8	1	.469	359	392
Cincinnati	6	10	0	.375	368	455

West

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
y-Kansas City	12	4	0	.750	565	421
x-L.A. Chargers	12	4	0	.750	428	329
Denver	6	10	0	.375	329	349
Oakland	4	12	0	.250	290	467

National Conference

East

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
y-Dallas	10	6	0	.625	339	324
x-Philadelphia	9	7	0	.563	367	348
Washington	7	9	0	.438	281	359
N.Y. Giants	5	11	0	.313	369	412

South

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
y-New Orleans	13	3	0	.813	504	353
Atlanta	7	9	0	.438	414	423
Carolina	7	9	0	.438	376	382
Tampa Bay	5	11	0	.313	396	464

North

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
y-Chicago	12	4	0	.750	421	283
Minnesota	8	7	1	.531	360	341
Green Bay	6	9	1	.406	376	400
Detroit	6	10	0	.375	324	360

West

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
y-L.A. Rams	13	3	0	.813	527	384
x-Seattle	10	6	0	.625	428	347
San Francisco	4	12	0	.250	342	435
Arizona	3	13	0	.188	225	425

x-clinched playoff spot
y-clinched division

Sunday's games

Detroit 31, Green Bay 0
Houston 20, Jacksonville 3
New England 38, N.Y. Jets 3
Carolina 33, New Orleans 14
Buffalo 42, Miami 17
Atlanta 34, Tampa Bay 32
Dallas 36, N.Y. Giants 35
Kansas City 35, Oakland 3
Philadelphia 24, Washington 0
Chicago 24, Minnesota 10
Pittsburgh 16, Cincinnati 13
Seattle 27, Arizona 24
L.A. Chargers 23, Denver 9
L.A. Rams 48, San Francisco 32
Baltimore 26, Cleveland 24
Indianapolis 33, Tennessee 17

Playoffs

Wild-card Playoffs

Saturday, Jan. 5
Indianapolis winner at Houston
Seattle at Dallas

Sunday, Jan. 6
L.A. Chargers at Baltimore
Philadelphia at Chicago

Divisional Playoffs

Saturday, Jan. 12
Baltimore/Los Angeles Chargers/Indianapolis or Tennessee at Kansas City
Chicago/Dallas/Seattle at L.A. Rams

Sunday, Jan. 13
Houston/Baltimore/Los Angeles Chargers at New England
Dallas/Seattle/Philadelphia at New Orleans

Conference Championships

Sunday, Jan. 20
TBD

Super Bowl

Sunday, Feb. 3
At Atlanta
AFC champion vs. NFC champion

Lions shut out Packers; Rodgers has concussion

GREEN BAY, Wis. — Detroit Lions kicker Matt Prater lined up for a field goal but seemed a little antsy, gesturing with his arms like a quarterback calling for a shotgun snap.

It turns out that was exactly what it was.

Prater's 8-yard pass on a fake field-goal try was a high and a little wobbly, but Levine Toilolo was so wide open in the end zone that it didn't matter.

The Lions' beleaguered season ended on a high note on Sunday, when almost everything went right for Detroit.

"Basically I was trying not to screw it up," Prater said. "It worked out, so it was fun."

Not so much for the Packers (6-9-1), who trailed 21-0 at the half and lost Aaron Rodgers early in the second quarter after to a concussion. The quarterback was sacked and lost his helmet on the second play of the second half.

Rodgers played two more series before departing.

Patriots rout Jets, clinch first-round bye

FOXBOROUGH, Mass. — The New England Patriots claimed two victories in one game.

Actually, it only took them about a half.

Tom Brady threw for three first-half touchdowns and New England clinched its ninth straight first-round bye in the playoffs. The Patriots (11-5) finished the season undefeated at home, where they'll have at least one playoff game.

"Essentially, we won next week because we won today," coach Bill Belichick said. "We'll see who our next opponent is, but we know they'll be good or they wouldn't be playing this time of the year."

After back-to-back December losses left the Patriots with a losing record on the road, they finished with two straight wins in New England to finish with the NFL's only perfect home record.

Patriots 38, Jets 3

New York	3	0	0	0	— 3
New England	7	14	7	10	— 38

First Quarter
NE—White 17 pass from Brady (Gostkowski kick), 5:16.
NYJ—FG Myers 40, :54.

Second Quarter
NE—Burkhead 18 pass from Brady (Gostkowski kick), 12:53.
NE—Dorsett 9 pass from Brady (Gostkowski kick), 11:03.

Third Quarter
NE—Van Noy 46 fumble return (Gostkowski kick), 10:48.

Fourth Quarter
NE—FG Gostkowski 38, 9:40.
NE—Edelman 5 pass from Brady (Gostkowski kick), 3:26.
A—65,878.

	NYJ	NE
First downs	12	24
Total Net Yards	239	375
Rushes-yards	23-104	30-131
Passing	135	244
Punt Returns	1-0	4-28
Kickoff Returns	4-70	0-0
Interceptions Ret.	0-0	0-0
Comp-Att-Int	16-28-0	24-33-0
Sacked-Yards Lost	4-32	1-6
Punts	5-47.4	4-39.8
Fumbles-Lost	0-0	1-1
Penalties-Yards	4-30	4-40
Time of Possession	27:47	32:13

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS
RUSHING—New York, McGuire 18-91, Darnold 1-28, Henderson 2-19, T.Cannon 2-16. New England, Michel 14-50, White 4-30, Edelman 2-24, Dorsett 2-16, Burkhead 5-14, Hoyer 3-(minus 3).

PASSING—New York, Darnold 16-28-0-167. New England, Brady 24-33-0-250.

RECEIVING—New York, Burnett 5-73, A.Roberts 3-28, R.Anderson 3-24, McGuire 2-24, Herndon 1-8, Leggett 1-7, J.Jones 1-3. New England, Hogan 6-64, Edelman 5-69, Dorsett 5-34, White 4-39, Gronkowski 2-24, Burkhead 1-18, Develin 1-2.

Chargers end drought in Denver with 23-9 win

DENVER — Philip Rivers and the Los Angeles Chargers recovered from a slow start for their first win in Denver since 2013.

The Chargers (12-4) are headed to the playoffs for the first time in five years, but they'll go in as a wild-card thanks to a last-second loss to the Broncos at home in November.

Were it not for that slip-up, the Chargers and not the Kansas City Chiefs would have earned No. 1 seed in the AFC playoffs.

Rivers was 14-for-34 for 176 yards and a touchdown and two interceptions. Both interceptions came in the first quarter, something that's happened just twice before in Rivers' 15-year NFL career.

The Broncos (6-10) careened into an offseason of uncertainty after posting double digit losses in consecutive seasons for the first time since 1966-67.

Chargers 23, Broncos 9

L.A. Chargers	0	7	7	9	— 23
Denver	0	3	0	6	— 9

Second Quarter
LAC—Emanuel 18 fumble return (Badgley kick), 5:32.
Den—FG McManus 28, :11.

Third Quarter
LAC—M.Williams 3 pass from Rivers (Badgley kick), 3:46.

Fourth Quarter
Den—Janovich 20 pass from Keenum (pass failed), 10:10.
LAC—Ekeler 1 run (Badgley kick), 5:48.
A—75,947.

	LAC	Den
First downs	17	19
Total Net Yards	276	370
Rushes-yards	36-116	25-82
Passing	160	288
Punt Returns	1-0	2-3
Kickoff Returns	0-0	3-60
Interceptions Ret.	1-19	2-15
Comp-Att-Int	14-34-2	31-48-1
Sacked-Yards Lost	5-47	1-4
Punts	5-46.8	6-42.0
Fumbles-Lost	3-2	4-3
Penalties-Yards	6-51	11-99
Time of Possession	28:12	31:48

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS
RUSHING—Los Angeles, Ekeler 8-58, Gordon 10-42, Benjamin 1-11, Jackson 6-10, Watt 1-8, Rivers 1-0, Smith 2-(minus 2), M.Williams 1-(minus 11). Denver, Freeman 17-60, Booker 5-14, Keenum 3-8.

PASSING—Los Angeles, Rivers 14-34-2-176. Denver, Keenum 31-48-1-292.

RECEIVING—Los Angeles, M.Williams 5-65, Allen 4-64, Gordon 3-24, T.Williams 2-32. Denver, Freeman 8-43, Hamilton 5-49, LaCosse 5-33, Booker 5-20, Patrick 4-46, Janovich 2-30, Cracraft 1-44, Sutton 1-25.

Third-stringer Allen lifts Panthers over Saints

NEW ORLEANS — Undrafted rookie Kyle Allen passed for 228 yards and two TDs before injuring his shoulder, and the Carolina Panthers cruised over a Saints squad looking ahead to the playoffs.

Allen, a third-stringer pressed into service with Cam Newton and backup Taylor Heinicke out, also ran for a short touchdown as Carolina snapped a seven-game slide. He led the Panthers to three TDs and a field goal on the first four drives of his first NFL start.

Carolina (7-9) led 23-0 at halftime, marking the first time since coach Sean Payton was hired in 2006 that the Saints (13-3) were shut out at home in a first half.

Panthers 33, Saints 14

Carolina	13	10	7	3	— 33
New Orleans	0	0	14	14	— 14

First Quarter
Car—Allen 1 run (Catanzaro kick), 10:04.
Car—Artis-Payne 15 run (kick failed), 2:07.

Second Quarter
Car—I.Thomas 8 pass from Allen (Catanzaro kick), 2:00.
Car—FG Catanzaro 22, :00.

Third Quarter
Car—Samuel 3 pass from Allen (Catanzaro kick), 3:46.
NO—Tre'Smith 9 pass from Bridgewater (Lutz kick), 13:28.

Fourth Quarter
Car—FG Catanzaro 51, 8:17.
NO—T.Hill 9 run (Lutz kick), 3:47.
A—73,028.

	Car	NO
First downs	25	17
Total Net Yards	374	294
Rushes-yards	37-111	27-184
Passing	263	110
Punt Returns	0-0	2-18
Kickoff Returns	0-0	0-0
Interceptions Ret.	1-5	0-0
Comp-Att-Int	18-30-0	14-22-1
Sacked-Yards Lost	1-5	2-8
Punts	3-54.7	5-42.0
Fumbles-Lost	0-0	0-0
Penalties-Yards	2-10	6-94
Time of Possession	33:26	26:34

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS
RUSHING—Carolina, Artis-Payne 16-56, Allen 5-19, McCaffrey 4-18, Cadet 11-17, Armah 1-1. New Orleans, Washington 11-71, Kamara 5-28, Line 3-19, Bridgewater 4-12, T.Hill 3-11, Lewis 1-6.

PASSING—Carolina, Allen 16-27-0-228, Gilbert 2-3-0-40. New Orleans, Bridgewater 14-22-1-118.

RECEIVING—Carolina, I.Thomas 5-61, Moore 4-81, Samuel 2-72, Wright 2-20, Artis-Payne 2-2, McCaffrey 1-22, Cadet 1-5, Armah 1-5. New Orleans, M.Thomas 5-29, Tre'Smith 3-30, Watson 2-19, Ingram 2-15, Lewis 1-12, T.Hill 1-3.

Bills finish season on high note, rout Dolphins

ORCHARD PARK, N.Y. — As they bid farewell to their unquestioned leader, defensive tackle Kyle Williams, the Buffalo Bills also enjoyed a glimpse into an encouraging future.

Rookie first-round draft picks Josh Allen and Tremaine Edmunds played a significant role in ensuring Williams headed into retirement on a high note after a 13-year career in Buffalo.

Allen had a career-best three touchdown passes and scored two more rushing, while Edmunds had a one-handed interception and added a sack. They put the finishing touches on a 6-10 season in which the rebuilding Bills won four of their final seven games.

Bills 42, Dolphins 17

Miami	0	14	3	0	— 17
Buffalo	14	0	14	14	— 42

First Quarter
Buf—Allen 1 run (Hauschka kick), 10:14.
Buf—Z.Jones 18 pass from Allen (Hauschka kick), 8:31.

Second Quarter
Mia—Tannehill 3 pass from Stills (Sanders kick), :54.
Mia—M.Jones 29 interception return (Sanders kick), :30.

Third Quarter
Buf—Foster 5 pass from Allen (Hauschka kick), 9:09.
Buf—McCoy 9 run (Hauschka kick), 6:57.
Mia—FG Sanders 29, 1:28.

Fourth Quarter
Buf—Allen 30 run (Hauschka kick), 11:13.
Buf—Z.Jones 26 pass from Allen (Hauschka kick), 7:44.
A—67,420.

	Mia	Buf
First downs	17	23
Total Net Yards	225	381
Rushes-yards	25-99	33-166
Passing	126	215
Punt Returns	2-9	2-9
Kickoff Returns	6-118	2-44
Interceptions Ret.	1-29	2-17
Comp-Att-Int	19-32-2	17-26-1
Sacked-Yards Lost	4-24	1-9
Punts	5-35.0	3-37.0
Fumbles-Lost	2-0	0-0
Penalties-Yards	4-35	3-24
Time of Possession	29:42	30:18

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS
RUSHING—Miami, Ballage 12-47, Drake 11-43, Tannehill 2-8, Ballage 11-80, Ivory 14-45, McCoy 10-26.

PASSING—Miami, Tannehill 18-31-2-147, Stills 1-1-0-3. Buffalo, Allen 17-26-1-224.

RECEIVING—Miami, Drake 5-52, Amendola 4-26, Stills 3-27, Smythe 3-14, Gesicki 1-18, B.Bolden 1-9, Tannehill 1-3, Ballage 1-0. Buffalo, Z.Jones 6-93, Foster 4-21, Croom 2-32, McCoy 2-18, Ivory 1-46, K.Williams 1-9, McCloud 1-5.

Lions 31, Packers 0

Detroit	7	14	3	7	— 31
Green Bay	0	0	0	0	— 0

First Quarter
Det—T.Jones 5 pass from Stafford (Prater kick), 2:58.

Second Quarter
Det—Toilolo 8 pass from Prater (Prater kick), 10:36.
Det—Zenner 13 run (Prater kick), 1:06.

Third Quarter
Det—FG Prater 43, 3:08.

Fourth Quarter
Det—T.Jones 23 pass from Stafford (Prater kick), 6:53.
A—77,341.

	Det	GB
First downs	25	9
Total Net Yards	402	175
Rushes-yards	38-130	13-46
Passing	272	129
Punt Returns	1-0	0-0
Kickoff Returns	0-0	5-111
Interceptions Ret.	1-(minu	0-0
Comp-Att-Int	21-33-0	19-40-1
Sacked-Yards Lost	1-2	3-29
Punts	4-40.3	7-45.3
Fumbles-Lost	0-0	0-0
Penalties-Yards	3-34	5-38
Time of Possession	36:54	23:06

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS
RUSHING—Detroit, Zenner 21-93, Riddick 4-24, Blount 11-15, Stafford 2-(minus 2). Green Bay, Kizer 4-40, J.Williams 8-4, Bibbs 1-2.

PASSING—Detroit, Stafford 20-32-0-266, Prater 1-1-0-8. Green Bay, Rodgers 3-5-0-26, Kizer 16-35-1-132.

RECEIVING—Detroit, Powell 6-103, A.Jones 6-50, Toilolo 4-43, T.Jones 3-40, Zenner 1-30, Bellore 1-8. Green Bay, Valdes-Scantling 3-43, Graham 7-61, Kumerow 3-19, J.Williams 3-16, Bibbs 3-13, Cobb 1-27, Tonyan 1-7, Lazard 1-7, Moore 1-5.

Patriots wide receiver Julian Edelman stretches but cannot catch a pass in front of New York Jets safety Jamal Adams during the second half Sunday in Foxborough, Mass.

STEVEN SENNE/AP

NFL

Foles, Eagles cruise

Philadelphia shuts out Washington to make playoffs

By Rob Maaddi
Associated Press

LANDOVER, Md. — Nick Foles' magic stretched all the way back to Minnesota.

Foles did it again, leading the Philadelphia Eagles to a 24-0 victory over the Redskins and the defending Super Bowl champions earned the NFC's final wild-card berth when Chicago beat the Vikings on Sunday.

The Eagles (9-7) will play at the Bears (12-4) next weekend.

"We're not sneaking in. We're here to do some damage," Eagles safety Malcolm Jenkins said.

They might have to do it without Foles, who left the game in the fourth quarter with a chest injury. Foles said he's sore near his ribs and will know more Monday.

"I'm optimistic," Foles said.

Before he gave way to Nate Sudfeld, Foles tied Philip Rivers' NFL record by completing 25 straight passes and threw two touchdown passes. Sudfeld fired a 22-yard TD on his only pass.

It felt like a home game for the Eagles. Philadelphia fans filled FedEx Field, sang "Fly! Eagles! Fly!" and chanted "Let's Go Bears!" There were several thousand empty seats and Redskins fans could only cheer for the Vikings to spite Eagles fans.

"I looked away," Foles said about seeing the Bears-Vikings score on the scoreboard. "I didn't want to know. I wanted to stay focused on winning this game."

Some players noticed the score while others didn't. They watched the final minutes together in the locker room and then celebrated.

"It was exciting," Eagles coach Doug Pederson said. "A lot of hard work that just paid off. It's what we set out to do. Obviously on this journey we didn't meet a lot of our goals, but one of them is to get into the postseason and we were able to do that, and so we're excited."

Foles, the Super Bowl MVP in Philadelphia's win over New England last February, is 6-0 in must-win games filling in for Carson Wentz.

Foles stepped in after Wentz was sidelined by a back injury earlier this month and guided Philadelphia to an upset on the road against the Rams as a 13½-point underdog. He set a franchise record for yards passing in a game with 471 in a 32-30 comeback win last week against Houston.

The Eagles dominated the Redskins, controlling the ball for 43:19. Philadelphia's defense held Washington to only 89 yards total offense.

The Redskins (7-9) lost six of seven after leading the NFC East at 6-3.

"It just wasn't a good enough year for us," Redskins coach Jay Gruden said. "Hopefully we'll regain that (fan) support sometime soon, very soon. Until then, we have a lot of work to do."

Foles finished 28-for-33 for 221 yards, two TDs and one interception.

Josh Johnson, making his third start for the Redskins after Alex Smith and Colt McCoy sustained season-ending injuries and Mark Sanchez was ineffective, was 12 of 27 for 91 yards and one pick.

"They did what good teams do and took care of business," Johnson said.

MARK TENALLY/AP

Philadelphia Eagles quarterback Nick Foles reacts to wide receiver Nelson Agholor's touchdown during the second half of Sunday's 24-0 win over the Washington Redskins in Landover, Md.

Eagles 24, Redskins 0

Philadelphia	3	7	7	7—24
Washington	0	0	0	0— 0

First Quarter
Phi—FG Elliott 33, :22.
Second Quarter
Phi—Jeffery 2 pass from Foles (Elliott kick), :30.
Third Quarter
Phi—Agholor 6 pass from Foles (Elliott kick), 1:25.
Fourth Quarter
Phi—Agholor 22 pass from Sudfeld (Elliott kick), 7:34.
A—63,188.

	Phi	Was
First downs	25	8
Total Net Yards	360	89
Rushes-yards	34-129	21-51
Passing	231	68
Punt Returns	1-2	2-20
Kickoff Returns	0-0	3-55
Interceptions Ret.	1-0	1-24
Comp-Att-Int	29-34-1	13-28-1
Sacked-Yards Lost	3-12	4-30
Punts	3-41.0	5-44.8
Fumbles-Lost	1-0	1-0
Penalties-Yards	5-25	2-15
Time of Possession	43:19	16:41

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS
RUSHING—Philadelphia, Smallwood 12-53, Adams 11-50, Sproles 7-24, Foles 2-4, Sudfeld 2-(minus 2). **Washington,** Thompson 2-10, Perine 3-7, J.Johnson 3-4, Peterson 4-0.
PASSING—Philadelphia, Foles 28-33-1-221, Sudfeld 1-1-0-22. **Washington,** J.Johnson 12-27-1-91, Way 1-1-0-7.
RECEIVING—Philadelphia, Jeffery 5-59, Agholor 5-40, Tate 4-33, Smallwood 4-24, Adams 3-33, Goedert 2-17, Ertz 3-15, Sproles 2-12. **Washington,** Thompson 5-14, Doctson 2-33, Floyd 2-15, Flanagan 1-14, Kidsy 1-8, Crowder 1-7, Chesson 1-7.

Bears keep Vikings out of playoffs

Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — While taking the NFC North champion Chicago Bears to the playoffs for the first time in eight years, coach Matt Nagy has displayed an energetic personality and aggressive mindset throughout his debut.

Even with their postseason position all but set, the Bears refused to let up, and kept rival Minnesota out of the playoffs in the process.

"I love winning. I think it's fun to win," Nagy said after the Bears' 24-10 victory. "So when you win, whoever it is, who cares?"

With the 24-0 win by Philadelphia at Washington, the Vikings (8-7-1) watched the Eagles claim the last wild-card spot and went home wondering what happened after signing Kirk Cousins for $84 million guaranteed in the offseason.

JIM MONE/AP

Bears wide receiver Taylor Gabriel, left, catches a pass over Vikings defensive back Holton Hill on Sunday in Minneapolis. Chicago won 24-10, sweeping Minnesota for the first time since 2011.

Bears 24, Vikings 10

Chicago	7	6	0	11—24
Minnesota	0	3	7	0—10

First Quarter
Chi—Howard 6 run (Parkey kick), 10:38.
Second Quarter
Chi—Howard 1 run (kick failed), 7:17.
Min—FG Bailey 45, :53.
Third Quarter
Min—Diggs 2 pass from Cousins (Bailey kick), 1:51.
Fourth Quarter
Chi—Cohen 3 run (Kwiatkoski pass from Trubisky), 7:46.
Chi—FG Parkey 42, 4:25.
A—66,878.

	Chi	Min
First downs	17	12
Total Net Yards	332	164
Rushes-yards	37-169	15-63
Passing	163	101
Punt Returns	2-(minu	1-4
Kickoff Returns	0-0	0-0
Interceptions Ret.	0-0	0-0
Comp-Att-Int	18-26-0	20-33-0
Sacked-Yards Lost	1-6	4-31
Punts	4-43.8	5-51.4
Fumbles-Lost	2-0	0-0
Penalties-Yards	11-102	3-30
Time of Possession	37:08	22:52

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS
RUSHING—Chicago, Howard 21-109, Cohen 5-24, Trubisky 3-16, Cunningham 6-13, Miller 2-7. **Minnesota,** Cook 11-39, Murray 2-18, Cousins 1-7, Thielen 1-(minus 1).
PASSING—Chicago, Trubisky 18-26-0-163. **Minnesota,** Cousins 20-33-0-132.
RECEIVING—Chicago, T.Burton 5-33, Gabriel 4-61, Wims 4-52, Cohen 2-8, White 1-22, Howard 1-5, Bellamy 1-2. **Minnesota,** Diggs 8-47, Cook 4-31, Rudolph 4-19, Thielen 3-38, Treadwell 1-7.

Chiefs romp past Raiders

By Dave Skretta
Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Patrick Mahomes stalked Chiefs wide receiver Damarcus Robinson on the sideline as chants of "MVP" echoed throughout Arrowhead Stadium, trying to track down a football that would serve as a keepsake not only of this night but of this season.

The first-year starter had just thrown an 89-yard scoring strike to Robinson, the 50th time one of his passes ended up in the end zone. It also gave Mahomes more than 5,000 yards passing, not to mention put a dagger in Oakland and clinched the AFC West title and No. 1 seed in the playoffs.

"They're special," Mahomes said after securing that memento, and after Kansas City (12-4) had wrapped up a 35-3 whitewash of the Raiders on Sunday. "To do those things in this league, that doesn't happen."

Not very often anyway.

Mahomes

Mahomes finished with 281 yards passing, the highlights the strike to Robinson and a 67-yard TD pass to Tyreek Hill. That gave him 5,097 yards and 50 touchdown passes, and allowed Mahomes to join Peyton Manning as the only QBs to hit 5,000 and 50 in the same season.

"This team, we love each other. We root for each other. And that's why we've had so much success," said Mahomes.

Hill finished with five catches for 101 yards, becoming the Chiefs' single-season leader for yards receiving with 1,479, while adding a fourth-quarter touchdown run.

Chiefs 35, Raiders 3

Oakland	0	3	0	0— 3
Kansas City	14	7	7	7—35

First Quarter
KC—Hill 67 pass from Mahomes (Butker kick), 13:35.
KC—Sorensen 54 interception return (Butker kick), 5:44.
Second Quarter
KC—Dam.Williams 4 run (Butker kick), 9:31.
Oak—FG Carlson 50, 1:04.
Third Quarter
KC—Robinson 89 pass from Mahomes (Butker kick), 8:33.
Fourth Quarter
KC—Hill 15 run (Butker kick), 13:25.
A—77,550.

	Oak	KC
First downs	20	18
Total Net Yards	292	409
Rushes-yards	29-127	27-99
Passing	165	310
Punt Returns	0-0	1-3
Kickoff Returns	3-91	1-26
Interceptions Ret.	1-0	2-121
Comp-Att-Int	24-33-2	16-27-1
Sacked-Yards Lost	1-9	0-0
Punts	4-45.5	1-28.0
Fumbles-Lost	3-2	0-0
Penalties-Yards	4-22	4-50
Time of Possession	33:56	26:04

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS
RUSHING—Oakland, Martin 21-100, Washington 4-30, Richard 3-1, Roberts 1-(minus 4). **Kansas City,** Dam.Williams 11-51, Dar.Williams 11-31, Hill 1-15, Henne 1-3, Mahomes 2-1, West 1-(minus 2).
PASSING—Oakland, Carr 24-33-2-165. **Kansas City,** Mahomes 14-24-1-281, Henne 2-3-0-29.
RECEIVING—Oakland, J.Nelson 9-78, Roberts 5-31, Cook 3-28, Waller 3-23, Richard 2-17, Ateman 1-7, Martin 1-1. **Kansas City,** Hill 5-101, Kelce 5-62, Sherman 2-19, Robinson 1-89, Dieter 1-22, Benjamin 1-9, Dam.Williams 1-8.

NFL

GENE J. PUSKAR/AP

Steelers cornerback Brian Allen reacts after watching on the scoreboard screen as the Ravens won, eliminating Pittsburgh from the playoffs.

Victory not enough for Pittsburgh

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — The win they needed but at times didn't act like they particularly wanted finally secured, the Pittsburgh Steelers lingered on the Heinz Field turf after a sluggish 16-13 victory over Cincinnati on Sunday and turned their eyes to the massive videoboard in the south end zone.

A season filled with promise six weeks ago before things came undone boiled down to something entirely out of Pittsburgh's control: whether Cleveland could pull off a stunning rally in Baltimore.

The Steelers (9-6-1) will miss the postseason for the first time since 2013.

"It just sucks," Steelers guard David DeCastro said. "How hard we work, how much effort we put in. To go from 7-2-1 to where we are now is heartbreaking."

And avoidable. Yet four losses in five games forced them to enter Week 17 needing to beat the Bengals and a hope upsetting Cleveland could upset the Ravens.

Cincinnati took a 10-3 halftime lead. Pittsburgh eventually rallied behind quarterback Ben Roethlisberger — who threw for 287 yards and a touchdown despite missing injured star receiver Antonio Brown to finish with a career-best and NFL-high 5,129 yards passing — and new kicker Matt McCrane booted three field goals.

Steelers 16, Bengals 13

Cincinnati	0	10	0 3—13
Pittsburgh	0	3	7 6—16

Second Quarter
Cin—S.Williams 58 interception return (Bullock kick), 12:37.
Pit—FG McCrane 49, 2:12.
Pit—FG McCrane 39, :00.
Third Quarter
Pit—Smith-Schuster 11 pass from Roethlisberger (McCrane kick), 3:50.
Fourth Quarter
Pit—FG McCrane 47, 8:35.
Cin—FG Bullock 27, 6:17.
Pit—FG McCrane 31, 1:56.
A—63,874.

	Cin	Pit
First downs	9	18
Total Net Yards	196	343
Rushes-yards	18-125	20-65
Passing	71	278
Punt Returns	1-1	3-20
Kickoff Returns	4-87	4-87
Interceptions Ret.	1-58	0-0
Comp-Att-Int	12-24-0	31-45-1
Sacked-Yards Lost	4-24	1-9
Punts	6-46.3	5-37.8
Fumbles-Lost	2-0	1-0
Penalties-Yards	9-85	9-70
Time of Possession	25:38	34:22

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS
RUSHING—Cincinnati, Mixon 13-105, Driskel 2-13, Bernard 3-7. **Pittsburgh,** Conner 14-64, Roethlisberger 3-3, Samuels 2-2, Rogers 1-(minus 4).
PASSING—Cincinnati, Driskel 12-24-0-95. **Pittsburgh,** Roethlisberger 31-45-1-287.
RECEIVING—Cincinnati, Erickson 6-63, Bernard 2-8, Tate 1-15, Uzomah 1-6, Mixon 1-2, Ross 1-1. **Pittsburgh,** Rogers 7-57, Samuels 7-40, Smith-Schuster 5-37, Washington 3-64, McDonald 3-39, Conner 3-30, Grimble 1-16, Switzer 1-2, Nix 1-2.

Ravens edge Browns to win North

BY DAVID GINSBURG
Associated Press

BALTIMORE — The Baltimore Ravens flipped the script and put one heck of an ending on a regular season that featured countless surprises and plot twists.

Getting two rushing touchdowns from rookie quarterback Lamar Jackson and a late defensive stand, Baltimore squeezed past the Cleveland Browns 26-24 Sunday to reach the playoffs as AFC North champions.

Kenneth Dixon accounted for 117 of Baltimore's season-high 296 yards on the ground, Jackson had 90 and the rejuvenated Ravens (10-6) broke a three-year playoff drought with their sixth win in seven games. Baltimore will open the postseason Sunday afternoon at home against the Los Angeles Chargers.

"It feels good, a home playoff game," cornerback Marlon Humphrey said. "Somehow it happened."

A year ago, Baltimore missed the playoffs by losing its finale at home to the Bengals, who rallied with a last-minute touchdown.

Remembering that disappointment, most of the announced crowd of 70,925 was on its feet as the Browns moved closer to field-goal range with the clock winding down. A 19-yard completion from Baker Mayfield to former Ravens top draft pick Breshad Perriman and a 16-yarder to Jarvis Landry pushed the ball to the Baltimore 39 with 1:20 left.

Following three straight incompletions, the Ravens blitzed Mayfield on fourth down and linebacker C.J. Mosley picked off a pass to clinch it. Baltimore finished a half-game ahead of the Pittsburgh Steelers, who beat Cincinnati 16-13.

"There were some nerves," tight end Hayden Hurst said. "I felt confidence that at some point one of those guys would make a big play and sure enough, C.J. did."

After killing off the final seconds, the Ravens danced into their locker room, donned caps proclaiming them AFC North champs, and mugged for selfies and shots of each other.

"If you want to write a book about this season, probably no one would believe it," coach John Harbaugh said.

It's been quite a turnaround for the Ravens, who were 4-5 before Jackson took over for injured Joe Flacco, the team's starting quarterback since 2008. Flacco was behind center in 2012, when Baltimore captured its last division crown and ultimately won the Super Bowl.

The Jackson-led running attack was too much for Cleveland (7-8-1), which was denied its first winning season since 2007. After trailing 20-7 at halftime and 26-17 with 7:20 left, the Browns could not recover against the franchise that left Cleveland after the 1995 season.

Mayfield threw three touchdown passes — including a 48-yarder to Landry — to finish with 27, an NFL record for a rookie.

"I'll make sure I say something about it on the plane ride home," interim coach Gregg Williams said. "Everybody needs a pat on the back, even where you're as competitive as that young man. And he is competitive."

Although Mayfield pierced the NFL's top-ranked defense for 376 yards, he was intercepted three times.

"Obviously, very disappointed for us to not get the win, but it's a great team. It's a playoff team," Mayfield said. "We want to be in their spot this time next year."

Ravens 26, Browns 24

Cleveland	7	0 7	10—24
Baltimore	10	10 3	3—26

First Quarter
Bal—FG Tucker 38, 9:27.
Cle—Perriman 28 pass from Mayfield (Joseph kick), 8:22.
Bal—L.Jackson 25 run (Tucker kick), 4:46.
Second Quarter
Bal—L.Jackson 8 run (Tucker kick), 14:54.
Bal—FG Tucker 35, 6:11.
Third Quarter
Cle—Landry 48 pass from Mayfield (Joseph kick), 12:27.
Bal—FG Tucker 44, 7:02.
Fourth Quarter
Cle—FG Joseph 35, 13:45.
Bal—FG Tucker 23, 7:20.
Cle—Callaway 1 pass from Mayfield (Joseph kick), 3:24.
A—70,925.

	Cle	Bal
First downs	18	24
Total Net Yards	426	463
Rushes-yards	14-50	47-296
Passing	376	167
Punt Returns	3-46	0-0
Kickoff Returns	4-108	2-37
Comp-Att-Int	23-42-3	14-24-0
Sacked-Yards Lost	0-0	2-12
Punts	4-45.0	4-49.0
Fumbles-Lost	0-0	2-1
Penalties-Yards	4-35	10-65
Time of Possession	21:30	38:30

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS
RUSHING—Cleveland, Chubb 9-24, Johnson 4-21, Perriman 1-5. **Baltimore,** Dixon 12-117, L.Jackson 20-90, Edwards 12-76, Montgomery 2-13, M.Williams 1-0.
PASSING—Cleveland, Mayfield 23-42-3-376. **Baltimore,** L.Jackson 14-24-0-179.
RECEIVING—Cleveland, Landry 5-102, Higgins 4-86, Callaway 4-79, Njoku 3-62, Perriman 3-45, Chubb 2-(minus 4), Johnson 1-3, Fells 1-3. **Baltimore,** Andrews 4-54, H.Hurst 2-43, Crabtree 2-20, Moore 2-19, Snead 1-25, Montgomery 1-9, J.Brown 1-7, Dixon 1-2.
MISSED FIELD GOALS—Cleveland, Joseph 46.

Luck lifts Colts into final playoff spot

BY TERESA M. WALKER
Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — The Indianapolis Colts have Andrew Luck healthy and throwing the ball all over the field.

That's more than enough with an injured Marcus Mariota stuck watching from the Tennessee sideline.

Luck threw for 285 yards and three touchdowns and the Colts beat the Titans 33-17 on Sunday night for the final spot in the postseason as the AFC's No. 6 seed.

With the Texans winning the AFC South title earlier with a victory over Jacksonville, that left the Colts and Titans playing for the second wild-card berth and a visit to Houston on Saturday.

"It's been a lot of fun," Luck said. "It's been a journey, that's for sure. I think what this team is doing is enjoying the journey."

Luck remained perfect against Tennessee, notching his 11th victory for the most wins by a quarterback since at least 1970 to win his first 11 starts against one franchise. He helped the Colts (10-6) — under first-year coach Frank Reich — end their postseason drought by winning for the ninth time in 10 games after a 1-5 start.

MARK ZALESKI/AP

Colts quarterback Andrew Luck runs to celebrate with teammates after throwing a touchdown pass against the Titans in the second half Sunday, in Nashville, Tenn.

"I mean you're 1-5, and that's special," Reich said. "It not only takes the whole team for 10 weeks, so that's very special."

The Titans (9-7) snapped a four-game winning streak with Mariota sidelined by neck and foot injuries. They missed a second straight playoff berth under first-year coach Mike Vrabel.

"We made a decision that Marcus wasn't going to play tonight," said Vrabel, who gave no details on when the decision was made nor the seriousness of his injury. "We'll continue to evaluate him and try to worry about his health and every one of those guys' health — Marcus included."

The Colts intercepted two of Blaine Gabbert's passes in the final 9:05.

Marlon Mack ran for 119 yards and a TD for the Colts. Adam Vinatieri kicked field goals of 53 and 25 yards. The NFL's oldest active player missed his final extra point.

Derrick Henry, who took the Titans' first offensive snap out of the wildcat, finished with 93 yards.

Tennessee was missing three defensive starters with four-time Pro Bowl defensive tackle Jurrell Casey placed on injured reserve Monday and linebacker Brian Orakpo scratched for a third straight game. That left the Titans unable to pressure Luck even with the Colts missing center Ryan Kelly because of a neck injury.

And Luck simply shredded a Tennessee defense that came in as the NFL's No. 2 scoring defense giving up just 18 points a game and sixth against the pass.

Colts 33, Titans 17

Indianapolis	7	10 7	9—33
Tennessee	0	10 7	0—17

First Quarter
Ind—Inman 11 pass from Luck (Vinatieri kick), 6:39.
Second Quarter
Ind—Ebron 9 pass from Luck (Vinatieri kick), 9:26.
Ten—Brown 22 interception return (Succop kick), 6:35.
Ind—FG Vinatieri 53, :39.
Ten—FG Succop 38, :00.
Third Quarter
Ind—Hewitt 1 pass from Luck (Vinatieri kick), 10:46.
Ten—Stocker 22 pass from Gabbert (Succop kick), 1:47.
Fourth Quarter
Ind—FG Vinatieri 25, 3:55.
Ind—Mack 8 run (kick failed), 2:24.
A—68,978.

	Ind	Ten
First downs	24	11
Total Net Yards	458	258
Rushes-yards	36-158	16-93
Passing	278	165
Punt Returns	1-0	2-10
Kickoff Returns	2-55	5-128
Interceptions Ret.	2-44	1-22
Comp-Att-Int	24-35-1	18-29-2
Sacked-Yards Lost	1-7	0-0
Punts	4-47.8	6-45.3
Fumbles-Lost	1-1	0-1
Penalties-Yards	12-96	9-75
Time of Possession	40:13	19:47

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS
RUSHING—Indianapolis, Mack 25-119, Wilkins 3-18, Luck 7-17, Hines 1-4. **Tennessee,** Henry 16-93.
PASSING—Indianapolis, Luck 24-35-1-285. **Tennessee,** Gabbert 18-29-2-165.
RECEIVING—Indianapolis, Inman 5-77, Ebron 4-60, Rogers 3-32, Hines 3-25, Mack 3-(minus 1), Hilton 2-61, Alie-Cox 1-21, Wilkins 1-5, Grant 1-4, Hewitt 1-1. **Tennessee,** C.Davis 5-48, D.Lewis 3-23, Jennings 3-17, Pruitt 2-26, Taylor 2-8, Stocker 1-22, Henry 1-13, Firkser 1-8.

Terror Towns
T-wolves' All-Star stuffs stat box in victory over Heat » NBA, Page 25

SPORTS

NFL: WEEK 17

Down to the wire

Ravens win AFC North; Eagles, Colts get wild cards

BY BARRY WILNER
Associated Press

The playoff chase went down to the final minutes of the season Sunday, when Baltimore squeezed in as AFC North winner, and defending Super Bowl champion Philadelphia got some help to secure an NFC wild card.

That left Pittsburgh and Minnesota out. Kansas City (12-4) grabbed the AFC's top seed, followed by New England (11-5), Houston (11-5) and Baltimore (10-6). The Chargers (12-4) own the first wild card and will play at the Ravens next Sunday. The Colts (10-6) romped past the Titans 33-17 at Tennessee and have the other wild card. They travel to Houston on

SEE WIRE ON PAGE 27

Ravens linebacker C.J. Mosley, center, celebrates his fourth-quarter interception with teammates Kenny Young and Patrick Onwuasor in Sunday's game against the Cleveland Browns in Baltimore. The Ravens won 26-24.

GAIL BURTON/AP

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- Steelers denied despite win, Page 31

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